

CHRISTIAN COURIER

May 14, 2001

A Reformed Biweekly

No.2664 \$1.60



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56th year of publication

Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative celebrates three years of joint effort

Margaret Dinsdale

TORONTO — As police in Quebec City and London, England cleaned up and removed protective barriers that prevented protesters against globalization and the fiscal policies of governments from damaging public property and businesses, the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI) celebrated three successful years of lobbying peacefully to change the way Canada does business internationally and with its own citizens.

The Initiative was supported by many churches such as the Christian Reformed Church and faith-based organizations such as the Canadian Council of Churches, World Vision and Citizens for Public Justice. Dennis Howlett, executive director of Ten Days for Global Justice which helped run the program, is pleased with the results on different levels.

Well-organized campaign

"Federal finance minister Paul Martin said that he had never seen such a well-organized and effective lobbying campaign," he said in an interview. "And how we did it was by engaging churches to find effective ways to do this."

Mr. Howlett points to how the campaign began in 1997, inspired by a Papal encyclical of 1995 about debt relief. It was based on Leviticus 25, which tells the Israelites to celebrate a Jubilee every 50 years to restore equality and justice, and to protect and nurture the land. The idea was taken up by many nations, and a worldwide network soon sprang up that saw interesting meetings such as rock superstar Bono of the band U2 meeting with Pope John Paul II in support of debt relief.

"We began with study and reflection on what Jubilee means," Howlett explained. "In September of 1998, we launched the program with three areas that we felt were the most relevant."

Three themes

Those three areas were "Release from Bondage" which includes debt reduction for nations and sweat-shop issues, "Redistribution of Wealth" that looked at child labor and fair trade, and "Renewal of the Earth" which targeted aboriginal land rights issues in Canada and around the world, as well as environmental issues such as the Kyoto Protocol to reduce

greenhouse gasses. The aim was to educate people in churches and the general public about the issues and to give them tools with which to effect change.

One matter that particularly concerned CEJI is the Export Development Corporation which was in the process of planning two dams in Colombia and Chile. Through CEJI, 16 MPs met with people from these countries to hear first-hand about the actual impact of these projects and, because of these meetings, the Corporation is making reforms to its environmental assessment policies.

An exciting trend

The results of a survey conducted by Ten Days shows that a very high number of people have contacted their MPs about these issues, which Mr. Howlett calls "an exciting trend to engaging politicians in discussions about ethics."

He sees the method of linking theology, education and action through initiatives like CEJI as a way of renewing churches at the local level and hopes that the lessons learned in the past three years will encourage other campaigns.

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One theme of the Jubilee initiative was "Renewal of the Earth," which targeted aboriginal land rights issues in Canada and around the world.

European churches sign charter for future co-operation

Harry der Nederlanden (with files from ENI)

STRASBOURG, France — Church leaders and young people from all of Europe's mainline Christian churches gathered in Strasbourg for four days in April to bring to a culmination two years of consultation designed to create an ecumenical charter for co-operation among the churches. Representatives from the Conference of European Churches, which includes over 120 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican members, and of the Council of European (Cath-

olic) Bishops' Conferences signed the *Charta Oecumenica*, a set of guidelines that were adopted by the churches committing them to work together more closely.

12 commitments

The *Charta* sets down commitments for church co-operation in 12 areas, including steps to "visible unity" of the church, missionary and evangelistic work in Europe, as well as support for European integration, the need for the non-violent resolution of conflicts, the need to strengthen the position

and "equal rights of women in all areas of life," the protection of the environment, and inter-religious dialogue.

The *Charta* will have "no magisterial or dogmatic character, nor is it legally binding under church law. Its authority will derive from the voluntary commitments of the European churches and ecumenical organisations." CEC representatives have stressed that the *Charta* should be seen as a "framework" to be adapted to local situations.

However, in his closing

remarks, Cardinal Lehmann warned against making things "too easy for ourselves." The *Charta*, he said, had to be "rooted in a concrete situation, but not in such a way that the text loses all its binding character." Although it is not a "doctrinal or canonical" document, he stressed, "we are committing ourselves, and this word is very important. We really commit ourselves: let us not weaken the meaning of the *Charta Oecumenica*!"

The roots of the *Charta* go back to a major European assembly in

Graz, Austria, in 1997, which called on the churches to "develop a common study document containing basic ecumenical duties and rights."

Concern about proselytism

The Graz recommendation was prompted in part by concern, particularly among Orthodox churches, about what they describe as "proselytism" by other churches seeking converts in traditionally Orthodox countries. There

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News

Many people have been active in Jubilee campaign

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The results of the survey are encouraging: 80 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as actively involved in a local church community and another 15 per cent said they were somewhat involved. The denomination or religious tradition identified in order of largest number were: Anglican (28 per cent), United (22 per cent), Roman Catholic (20 per cent), Lutheran (12 per cent), Presbyterian (six per cent), Christian Reformed (six per cent), and Menonite (five per cent).

Many meetings with MPs

Most respondents said they had actively participated in the debt cancellation petition, letters to the finance minister regarding federal



Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

budget, Aboriginal land rights campaign, action on climate change, and the campaign to end

child poverty. About one-quarter of respondents reported meeting with their Member of Parliament on Jubilee campaigns in the past three years. Based on this and reports received from local groups it is estimated that at least 100 to 120 meetings took place with MPs over the three years of the Jubilee Initiative.

National Aboriginal Day

Though officially ending this year, CEJI will form a committee that will continue to track the Canadian government's promise to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. One of the final actions will be on June 21, National Aboriginal Day, that will see three trainloads of people from across the country arriving in Ottawa to support the

"Land Rights, Right Relations" petition which is supported by Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Inspirational theology

In the end, for many participants, linking social issues with their faith was important. Here are some of the comments from the survey, which perhaps best sum up the effect the experience had on people of faith:

"Theology of Jubilee was very inspirational — ancient wisdom relevant to today. It also provided a connection with broader church membership going beyond the social justice activists. The issues are important with or without a theological component, but making the

link with our spiritual beliefs adds an extra dimension."

"We have become aware of being part of a larger movement. We are not working on something alone or in isolation; we are joining hands and hearts with Christians across our country and our globe."

"Hopefully it made people more aware of a variety of concerns... allowed some people to be 'politically active' in activities such as letter writing, post card campaign, etc. In most cases these people would not normally be involved in such activities."

"Our parish now serves Fair Trade coffee on a regular basis."

European churches urged to avoid harmful competition

... continued from page 1

was also concern about difficult relations between majority and minority churches in various parts of Europe.

It was originally intended, according to Cardinal Karl Lehmann, president of Germany's (Catholic) Bishops' Conference, that "we should produce if possible binding and mandatory rules on how we deal with conflict." But "all of a sudden," he told journalists, "we realised that we could not produce a catalogue of rules out of nowhere."

Avoiding fresh divisions

Although the *Charta* does not specifically mention "proselytism," it calls for churches to discuss their "plans for evangelization with other churches, entering into agreements with them and thus avoiding harmful competition and the risk of fresh divisions." It also states that no one should be induced to convert "through moral pressure or material incentive" nor should they be hindered "from entering into conversion of his or her own free will."

The *Charta* opens by citing Christ's prayer for unity (John 17:21) and confessing the guilt and need for repentance of the churches in the face of their division. Confessing "one holy catholic and apostolic church," it says "our paramount ecumenical task is to show forth this unity, which is always a gift of God."

"The most important task of the churches in Europe is the common proclamation of the Gospel, in both word and deed, for the salvation of all," it declares, and

pointing to the widespread falling away from Christian teachings and values, it counsels churches to "increased dedication to Christian education (e.g. catechism classes) and pastoral care in local congregations, with a sharing of experiences in these fields."

Christians urged to communicate Gospel

The whole people of God are urged "to communicate the Gospel in the public domain" and to conduct evangelism in a way that avoids "harmful competition and the risk of fresh divisions."

At the same time, the document is careful to stress that every person should be free to "choose his or her religious and church affiliation as a matter of conscience, which means not inducing anyone to convert through moral pressure or material incentive, but also not hindering anyone from entering into conversion of his or her own free will."

Willingness to repent

The *Charta* pledges its members to move towards one another, beginning with a "renewal of our hearts and the willingness to repent and change our ways." This section also speaks of overcoming "the feeling of self-sufficiency within each church" and making an effort to look for ways to learn from one another's traditions and to work together in Christian education, theological training, continuing education and research. Other areas of cooperation are pointed to, such as praying together and for one another, discussing issues together and



A Gothic cathedral, built in 1439, dominates the skyline of Strasbourg, France, where ecumenical meetings were held in April.

dialoguing at different levels, "in which human rights and the working toward creating a humane, socially conscious Europe,

solidarity prevail."

"We likewise insist," it continues, "on the reverence for life, the value of marriage and the family, the preferential option for the poor, the readiness to forgive, and in all things compassion."

A section in the *Charta* is devoted to the churches' duty to reconcile peoples and cultures by promoting social justice and closing the gap between the rich and poor as well as strengthening the position of women in society. Another one commits them "to strive to adopt a lifestyle free of consumerism and a quality of life informed by accountability and sustainability."

Better relations with other religions

Sections on cultivating better relations with Judaism, Islam and being open to other religions and worldviews round out the document.

Leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church quickly distanced themselves from the charter, warning that it might prove "harmful and counterproductive" to dialogue. They particularly mentioned the commitment to work together to visible unity. The criticism in some quarters might prove so strong, they suggested, that it might only create further division.

Signatories pointed out that the charter has no ultimate authority and that every church must receive and adapt it to its own situation. They also expressed the hope that it will not close but serve as an opening for further dialogue.

News/Politics

Appointment of archbishop as Governor-General of Australia prompts debate

Margaret Simons

SYDNEY, Australia (ENI) — An Anglican archbishop has been appointed as the Governor-General of Australia. He will be the first churchman to hold the controversial post as representative of Queen Elizabeth II and Australia's constitutional head of state.

The appointment has sparked a debate on the separation between church and state and renewed long-running controversy on the relevance of the British monarch, who is also Queen of Australia, and her representative to modern-day Australia.

Archbishop Peter Hollingworth has been Archbishop of Brisbane,

capital of the state of Queensland, since 1990. Before this he was best known as executive director of the welfare agency, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and has been outspoken on welfare issues and a strong advocate of Aboriginal rights.

Special status?

His appointment, while welcomed by all sides of the political spectrum, has been criticized by some leading church figures as giving an impression of special status for the Anglican Church.

Prime Minister John Howard dismissed the criticism, stating on national television: "His

[Hollingworth's] immediate predecessor is a devout practising Catholic, and the governor-general before that was a self-declared atheist. I think it shows we have eclectic tastes. It would be patently absurd to disbar an eminent Australian by reason of the fact that he was an ordained minister or priest."

Church/state division clearly understood

At a media conference held after the announcement of his appointment, Archbishop Hollingworth claimed it would amount to discrimination if clergymen were the only people excluded from the

highest office in the land.

He said he "clearly understood the demarcation" between church and state.

But the appointment has been criticized from within the churches by the Anglicans and Baptist leaders. Anglican priest Father James Murray, religious affairs editor for an Australian newspaper, said the day might come when a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh held the post. Religious persuasion should not make a difference, but a bishop has a defined role "underpinned by life-long vows" which cannot be simply put aside.

But the Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia, Dr. Peter Carnley, has rejected the criticism, saying that unlike the Church of England, which is the established church in Britain, the Anglican Church in Australia is an autonomous body.

"Anglicans in Australia understand that they live in a secular,

democratic society, where no church has an established position at law," Archbishop Carnley said in a statement.

He said that Archbishop Hollingworth would retire from the clergy before taking up the appointment in June, and would no longer use his religious title.

In 1999, a referendum was held that proposed making Australia a republic, in which case the governor-general, appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Queen, would have been replaced by a president appointed by the Australian Parliament.

Polls showed that although the referendum failed, the majority of Australians were in favor of a republic. Many voted against the referendum because they disagreed with the model offered. They favored a popularly-elected president, rather than one appointed by politicians.

The culture of death

Last month the Netherlands officially codified two related practices for which it had become notorious over the past three decades, namely, euthanasia and assisted suicide. Thus the country that once produced such influential witnesses to Christ's lordship as Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper has taken a long step towards what Pope John Paul II has called the culture of death.

A 'good death'

Euthanasia literally means a "good death," and its proponents believe that allowing people to decide when and how to end their own lives will prevent, or at least cut short, needless suffering. The best-known North American advocate and practitioner is Michigan's infamous Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who willingly courted imprisonment to further his cause. Most jurisdictions here still legally prohibit the practice, although Oregon stands alone in allowing physician-assisted suicide since 1996. It may be joined by other states, and the Dutch example could set a precedent.

Those favoring euthanasia appeal to our compassion in arguing that those enduring the pains of a fatal and degenerative illness should have a right to end that suffering. What right have the rest of us, they ask, to deny them that? It is all too easy for those of us who are healthy and whole to insist that the terminally ill be prevented from taking their lives into their own hands. Those standing on the letter of the law can only lack compassion, it is frequently charged.

However, proponents of euthanasia should consider the following points.

No choice made entirely freely

First, no choice is ever made entirely freely. Each choice that I make in a single day is made, not by an autonomous will, but by a flesh-and-blood human being subject to all the ordinary and extraordinary influences that go into the normal decision-making process. In the brave new world of euthanasia, Mary may decide that, as her health deteriorates with age, she is becoming a burden to her husband, children and grandchildren. Her doctor



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

tells her that, because of cutbacks in funding for medical care in her province and because of the high cost of treatment, it might be better for everyone if she were to accept a "good death" now rather than cling to life and rack up medical expenses that will eventually have to be paid by her descendants. She may actually prefer to live, but so many around her are letting her know, whether tacitly or overtly, that it's time to go. Even a law insisting that the choice be made freely cannot guarantee this, because no choice is ever made entirely without external influences. The law cannot ensure what cannot exist.

Euthanasia supported by post-Christian societies

Second, it is by no means coincidental that the push for the legalization of euthanasia is greatest in post-Christian societies that have retained a vestige of the biblical concern for those in distress but have lost any sense that the present life has meaning pointing beyond itself. The facile assumption that death ends suffering can win widespread acceptance only where people have lost their belief in an afterlife where they will receive rewards or punishments.

Third and finally, if life itself is a gift from God, then we dare not spurn that gift lest we reject the Giver as well. For it is precisely when we deceive ourselves that we control our own destinies, including the timing of our own death, that we are likely to find ourselves under the worst sort of tyranny, where the inconvenient lives of the elderly, the weak and the unborn are deemed expendable in the interest of maintaining a certain level of comfort for the vigorous and powerful.



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Editorial

Evan H. Runner: master teacher

Harry der Nederlanden

On Saturday, April 21, 2001, I got up 5 a.m. to meet a bus carrying a group of students, professors and other folk from the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto to Grand Rapids, Michigan. In the beautiful round chapel of Calvin College, several hundred people from the U.S. and Canada gathered at 3 that afternoon to honor a retired, 85-year-old Calvin professor by naming after him the chair in the history of philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies.

The hearts of generations of students

It was one of those formal occasions which opens with a parade of academics wearing the colorful gowns of the universities where they earned their doctorates and where people wearing funny hats on their heads and large official seals around their necks speak a latinate language that makes you think of the Middle Ages. But this wasn't about ancient learning, abstractions, musty books and issues of concern only to professors. This was about the hearts of several generations of students. This was about vision: a vision of learning that does not weaken or subvert faith but that vitalizes, deepens and expands it because it arises from it; a vision of learning that does not set the learned over against or above the community of believers but that binds them together in service to the Kingdom of God.

Dr. Evan Runner was so honored not just because

he inspired and taught many students to become scholars; first of all, he was concerned to turn them on to a vision of scholarship as part of our service to God, as a work that must glorify him and open human eyes to his presence and calling in every nook and cranny of life. He exerted his considerable teaching talents, including a flair for the dramatic and a gift for rhetoric, to instill in his students an appreciation and excitement particularly for the approach to culture associated with the names of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. But Runner was more than a teacher; he established a warm and genuine relationship with many of his students outside the classroom. The tributes by Uko Zylstra and Hendrik Hart, both former students of Runner and now professors themselves, testified to this deeply personal influence Runner had on them — and on many hundreds more like them, who did not go on to become academics but whose vision of their Christian calling was no less influenced by this remarkable man.

Loud, heated discussions

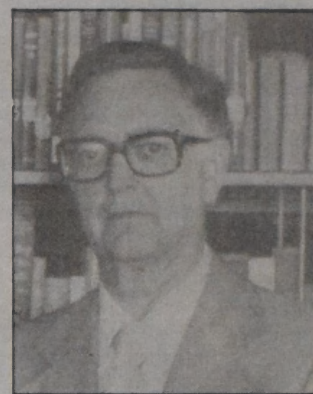
For many, much of this influence came through Runner's role as sponsor of the Groen Club, named after the Dutch historian best known for his radical critique of the spirit of the French Revolution. Besides doing their regular studies, members of the Groen Club labored long into the night to write papers from a Reformed perspective on critical issues, which they then read to their fellows to stimulate discussion. And what discussions they were: often loud and heated and stretching us far beyond our capacities.

A large percentage of the Groen Club was Canadian. Many were still influenced by the Kuyperian vision of a holistic religion that goes beyond the private sphere without succumbing to the social gospel. Runner encouraged his Groeners not to settle for the compromised gospel of American evangelicalism; he kept open the possibility of transforming the mind and reforming the institutions of North America. In the process, of course, he also bred not a little brashness and more than a dose of arrogance in his noisy disciples. Yes, there was pomposity, obnoxiousness and rhetoric in abundance, but there was also passionate commitment to biblical faith and calling. Runner preached and ministered to his students as well as drilling them in his philosophy.

Runner led us to vantage points

Not a few were so influenced by him that they picked up his personal mannerisms. Not a few learned to spout multisyllabics that had meaning only to other Dodowierdians. But almost all were infected by a full-orbed faith that accepted that God's Word has relevance to absolutely everything in creation and history. Runner led us to vantage points where we saw — or thought we saw — infinitely in all directions and the valleys were filled with gardens and towns ready to burst into spring with the color and music of the new creation. Not because we were clever and powerful, but because God is sovereign.

His stress on the sovereignty of God and on the call to live life integrally and radically prompted him to wage war on all forms of synthesis. To synthesize meant to concede that God's Word has nothing to say to some areas of human endeavor, to pretend that we can go it without him in some things. He spat out the word "neutrality" with the same disgust as "synthesis", for he insisted that God demands to be acknowledged and served in every dimension and every



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Dr. H. Evan Runner

moment of our lives, individual and corporate. That's integrity. That's radicalness.

Having rejected synthesis of any kind, one might suppose that this would lead students to ignore the products of pagan and secular culture to focus exclusively on the works of Christians. At best, one might suppose that much of the history of

Western philosophy, science and art would serve only as an illustration of error. Runner preached the antithesis between the culture of unbelief and belief, but the Calvinist emphasis on the sovereignty of God led him to discern even in the works of the pagans an encounter with the Lord of Scripture. Not because the reason of Plato and Aristotle somehow escaped the effects of sin, but because all creation testifies to its Creator and no one can seek to make sense of his experience without encountering God.

Faithful, dynamic teaching

By his faithful and dynamic teaching, Dr. Runner taught several generations of Canadian and American leaders to engage the culture of their nations and the problems of their world not on terms dictated by the secular mind but by searching for alternatives in the light of God's Word.

Thirty years ago Runner's students used to pack themselves into someone's rusty Chevy late Friday afternoon to race from Grand Rapids to Toronto to take in a couple of lectures at the Institute and then race back again in the wee hours blinking back sleep. It seemed fitting that to attend this inauguration of the Runner chair we had to make a similar pilgrimage in a decrepit bus.

Dr. Robert Sweetman, the first appointee to the new chair, delivered an appropriately imaginative meditation on how philosophers influence one another in history according to one of Runner's mentors, Dr. Vollenhoven. In his address, "Of Runners and Batons: Viewing the Marathon of Philosophy from the Cool of the Giant's Shade," Sweetman, among other things, pointed out that handing down ideas (and other traditions) from one person to another and from one generation to another is not a mechanical process. They undergo sea-changes in meaning as they are smelted or braided together in new combinations and infused with new direction. Runner learned this "spiritual archaeology" from Vollenhoven. This disentangling of various threads of influence also upon Christian thinking does not give rise to despair in face of the calling to integrity and purity but renews our hope; it is, I will add, a form of intellectual conversion or reformation.

May God grant Dr. Sweetman the vision and verve to inspire many generations of students to bring to the Lord as living sacrifices the virtues and vitalities of their minds as Runner did before him.

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

*An independent biweekly that seeks to:
report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
provide contact for the Christian community.*

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Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Opinion

World Council of Churches: a consumer's perspective

Dr. John H. Boer

Shortly before his death, Marlin Van Elderen argued in *The Banner* that the CRC should join the WCC. He felt that their interaction would be beneficial for both. He sought the best for the church that he loved, not the worst. He wanted it to grow and reach out, not to shrink into insignificance. And he wanted it to be heard.

His was the voice of daily experience, the voice of an inside staffer. Van Elderen's article inspired a dialogue in the pages of *Christian Courier* (CC, Oct. 30, 2000) between two friends, Harry Antonides and Dr. George Vandervelde, both well known to CC readers.

I add my voice to this discussion. During my 30 years as CRC missionary to Nigeria, I used WCC publications to great profit, and while serving with the Institute of Church & Society in Nigeria I often gratefully consulted with WCC staff on a wide range of issues, on which my own denomination, the CRC, had little or nothing to offer. On occasion they would either send us staff to help in our projects or provide us with a grant to bring in people from abroad. Indeed, I am a grateful consumer, though not an uncritical one. And my conclusion is...join it! Both will be the better for it.

WCC and CRC: two mixed bags

All friends of the WCC and CRC know that both are mixed bags of positives and negatives, of virtues and vices. Both can easily be either condemned or praised, depending on your angle of vision. WCC has its weaknesses. Antonides brought up the issue of the WCC's attitude towards the former Soviet Union. Indeed, that was a problematic issue, one the WCC itself was very aware of, but it did not always know what to do about it. It could be argued that it was captive to one of its largest members, the Eastern Orthodox Church. It failed to move into the public prophetic mode it often adopts towards rogue countries.

At the same time, it should be realized that it often struggled hard behind the scenes with that government, more than many people realize. It was often a matter of hard choices. I am not defending WCC's stance, but I am indicating the difficult alternatives it had to face. As Antonides well knows from experience, one keeps clean hands only when not involved in the ambiguities of life's struggles.

Similarly, the CRC too is a mixed bag. I once did a study of the relationship between colonialism and missions. After searching high and low in CRC resources with little success, I finally stumbled on materials produced by the WCC and the International Missionary Council, one of the WCC's predecessors. They had already been wrestling with these issues for many decades. Because of the CRC's isolation, I had been trying to re-invent the wheel.

No more re-inventions

This has been my experience several times. I wasted time until I woke up and began with WCC materials. No more re-inventions. In matters such as the external debt, wholistic health care, the ethics of

investments, Christian-Muslim relations — in all of these I got much more help from the WCC than from the CRC. And I was frequently amazed to find how Reformed their approach was in these areas, though not in all. It is troubling to see the CRC community ignore that Reformed approach in dealing with socio-economic issues.

Economic thinking in the CRC and WCC

Let me give one concrete example. I wrote a study about investment ethics under the title *Caught in the Middle: Christians in Transnational Corporations*, in which I devoted a chapter to CRC investment practices, both of the church's institutions as well as of its members. I came to the following conclusion:

Wealth... tends to stupify. I believe this has happened to some extent in the CRC. The considerable amount of money the constituency has for investments has stupified her..., made her insensitive to the causes of world hunger and made her easy prey for the... public relations efforts of [corporations] and their allies. The CRC has bought into a system that cannot be justified from the Christian perspective.... The mentality of the middle to higher middle class has stultified the constituency's spiritual imagination and courage. The... revolutionary heritage of John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper has not been allowed free scope. The rationalizations of capitalism have taken over.

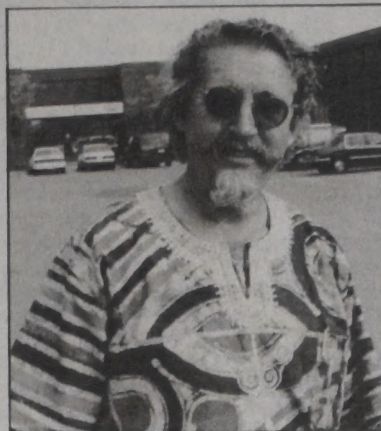
The demand for taking concrete ethical responsibility for one's investment is missing. There is an almost reckless abandonment of responsibility: Untold millions of dollars are entrusted to all kinds of... managers with either few questions asked or with little intention to follow up the answers obtained. It is largely an unconscious policy of leaving sleeping dogs lie. In this regard I judge the CRC and her constituency to be highly irresponsible. In the area of financial stewardship all the main doctrines of the church with social implications are ignored, neglected, bypassed. Denominational shibboleths about the Kingdom of God, the lordship of Christ, the application of Scripture to all of life, stewardship — they hardly function. In the matter of economic involvement, the CRC is in danger of betraying itself, the world and her Lord.

Why so far behind others?

Some rethinking has been taking place that might move the church in the right direction. But, I asked, "Why should a denomination with such revolutionary doctrine and with a college acclaimed for its radical Reformed scholarship be so far behind others? Why should she not lead?"

Indeed, why should she be so far behind the WCC on this score? Why be so isolated that her members are condemned to reinvent what was long ago covered by WCC?

I suggest that the reason is not theology but our economic interests. The majority of the CRC constituency, certainly in the city where I presently live, has moved up into the upper middle class. WCC criticism of major world economic directions is now seen as a



CHRISTIAN COURIER PHOTO

Dr. John H. Boer

threat to our economic interests. The subtle influence of economic interest overrides our theology and spirituality without our even noticing the shift that has occurred.

Different methods of theologizing

A major reason that the atmospheres within the CRC and WCC are quite different lies in their differing methods of theologizing. The CRC tends to theologize in a vacuum, using only the Bible and other theological books. Often there is little reference to any specific socio-economic context, to the facts on the ground. It often sounds very profound, highly theoretical and abstract — and it is often very impractical. But we love that kind of method, and others tend to admire us for our scholarship. The more profound the theory, the more we are impressed with ourselves. The result is a very detached theology that makes no waves and sounds very calm, rational, profound and respectable.

This picture is admittedly one-sided. There are some very good publications coming out of the CRC that we can be proud of.

However, for practical purposes these are largely ignored in the economic life of the CRC community. That constituency keeps climbing the socio-economic ladder, invests with great enthusiasm and keeps the builders of yachts and cottages busy. It is hardly affected by this kind of theology — and likes to keep it that way.

On behalf of the vulnerable

The WCC, particularly in the departments with which I co-operated, does theology "from the bottom up." That is to say, it usually theologizes on behalf of the weak and vulnerable. It begins by gathering their opinions and by doing research in partnership with them. Only then does it move on to the Bible and other books.

The result is that much of their theology is a theology of tears for the suffering and a theology of challenge to the powerful. It is never without passion and hardly ever "respectable" as far as the powerful are concerned. The very atmosphere or "feel" of their theological output is much more practical, concrete and overtly compassionate.

Hence, WCC has been in the forefront of external debt reduction campaigns. In fact, it was involved in such campaigns long before they became popular. As Johnny-come-latelies, CRC leaders are still calmly demanding more time for research on the effect of debt forgiveness, blind to the urgency of this critical issue for millions of people right now. WCC has been there years ago. Why should the CRC insist on re-inventing the wheel and prolonging the misery? Does she have a corner on research that the WCC lacks?

I am not trying to pit the WCC and the CRC against each other. I am only emphasizing that the CRC can be made to look very slack and the WCC biblically responsible. I think many of us can generate a much longer list of negatives about the CRC than Antonides produced about the WCC.

See IS CRC page 16...

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 09375. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.

U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subscriptions:	Canada	U.S.A.
(effective Jan. 1, 1999)	(G.S.T. incl.)	(G.S.T. free)
one year (26 issues)	\$39.54	\$31.60 (US)
two years (52 issues)	\$75.00	\$60.00 (US)

overseas one year \$80.00 surface mail

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (9 business days before publication date); classified advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (9 business days before publication date). See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.

Address all correspondence to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions: ccscrip@aol.com, advertising: ccadpromo@aol.com

PRINTED IN CANADA



Education

NorthStar: an online Christian school

Alan Doerksen

SHERWOOD PARK, Alberta — Although based in Alberta, NorthStar Academy is a private, online Christian school whose virtual classrooms are open to students around the world, as long as they have the money and technology to log on.

Brett Bowers, the founder of Northstar Academy, was preparing himself to teach English as a Second Language when his brother-in-law invited him to join him in his online school, reports ASSIST. After some initial reluctance, he decided to help his brother start the school. Bowers was inspired to develop Northstar Academy especially to serve children of missionaries all across the world.

NorthStar Academy now offers three schooling programs on its website (www.northstar-academy.org) a Canadian, American, and United Kingdom curriculum.

How it works

Here is how the academy works, as outlined on its website:

Teachers send their lessons and assignments over the Internet primarily through the conferencing software called FirstClass, lead group discussions, evaluate student assignments, and engage in most of the same teacher-student interactions that occur in traditional classrooms. Students complete their assigned work using printed material, videos, and software provided by the school. Completed assignments and exams are sent back to teachers for marking and then returned to the students, all by e-mail. NorthStar also provides for clusters of students in homes or schools to work together in person on many assignments.

Bowers tells *Christian Courier* of further opportunities NorthStar is planning for student interaction: "For the NorthStar Canada program, we will be organizing regional 'clubs' and periodic mini-conferences."

NorthStar-Canada has intentionally avoided any real-time instruction (such as video-conferencing). This allows its international community to be indepen-



Brett Bowers, the founder of Northstar Academy

dent of differing time zones and personal or school schedule requirements. This makes it especially convenient for students studying overseas due to family ministry or business commitments, states NorthStar.

Because it is connected with NorthStar U.S.A. and NorthStar U.K., students also have the opportunity to get to know students and teachers from around the world who are part of those programs. In international schools this also enables students from different countries to all study in a common format, while using curriculum from their home country.

Connection with Christian day schools

NorthStar-Canada is operated by Koinonia Christian Schools, a school system that operates eight independent evangelical Christian schools in Alberta, Canada. It focuses primarily on students in grades 7-12. It uses the Internet to link local students with other students worldwide and with Alberta certified teachers who provide instruction and marking. As a result, students receive full Alberta credit for their courses and receive an Alberta high school graduation diploma after completing grade 12.

Bowers explains, "We currently have only 14 students in a 'pilot project' of NorthStar Canada, but we do have 163 students in the NorthStar U.S.A. program and 78 students in the NorthStar UK program. NorthStar Canada will begin in 'full effect' for the 2001-02 school year." Of the students enrolled so far, 13 are in Alberta and one is in Quebec, reports Bowers. "We will have seven Canadian teachers in the NorthStar Canada program starting next year."

For the American program,

missionary children "comprise about 90 per cent of the student body."

Latest technology needed

NorthStar provides each student with "FirstClass" software and a NorthStar Resource CD which contains other necessary software. Students must provide their own copy of Microsoft Office 97 or 2000. Each family or school needs to provide items such as: a Pentium computer, modem, Internet connection, resources such as educational CD-ROMs and multimedia encyclopedias, a printer and scanner.

Naturally, such items will put NorthStar's online schooling out of the financial reach of some Canadian families, as well as many potential students in other countries. The technology may not be

available in some countries, either.

For Alberta students, the cost of tuition is free, reports Northstar. For Canadian students living outside of Alberta, tuition fees for 2001-2002 are \$2600 (Cdn) for a full-time student. For non-Canadian students living outside of Alberta, tuition fees are \$2860 (Cdn) for a full-time student.

NorthStar-Canada also has plans to assist small Christian day schools to establish grade 7-12 programs (grade 5-12 in the near future) which utilize NorthStar's online courses, and/or to broaden their program offerings using the NorthStar courses. Through the NorthStar-Canada program, small Christian schools in Alberta can set up an economical grade 5-12 program with as few as one or two students.

NorthStar-Canada also enrolls

traditional home school students in Kindergarten through grade 12 through its home school division. Home school students living with their parents in Alberta also receive government funding to help cover the cost of home schooling when registering with NorthStar-Canada. Another option, a blended program, allows students to take some courses on-line while taking other courses through traditional home schooling.

NorthStar-Canada is also designing several courses specifically for secular school students who wish to develop a Christian perspective on the subjects that they are taking at a secular school. The first course that has been designed for public school students is Thinking Christianly in a Secular World. This course is suitable for students enrolling in grades 9-12.

Cell phones, prayer, and the touch of God

People love their technology. People adore their cell phone, their e-mail, their clock radios, and their fuel-injected vehicles. It helps us all "keep in touch." We "Come Together" with the power of Nortel and the music of the Beatles.

Yet, technology brings people together in such a way that it keeps them apart. Think of it this way: all technology is a mediator between us and the world, between us and others. It becomes a synthetic attachment between all people living in the modern world. Technology allows us to fly far away from each other and then talk to each other through a cell phone or computer. Having separated us, it becomes the wire through which we touch each other again. It's a cold touch, but a touch nevertheless.

Naked before God

I want to tell you a story and then make a point that relates to the argument above. I had an ex-Reformed student come in my office one day. He no longer wanted to associate with his Reformed background as, "All's they care about is whether my body is warming the pew."

He had a deep and powerful yearning to be known, but his problem was that he was painfully shy. He could not speak in class. He could not even speak to the friendly, attractive woman who attended many of his classes. He lived alone in his own frustrated inner world, dying to get out and be touched.

"Do you ever pray?" I asked him one day.

"Funny you should ask," he said. He then opened his notebook in front of me. "I was just sitting in class again today, flustered, trying to break out of my shell but finding I couldn't. And so I wrote this across the page with a heavy, shaking hand." He showed me what he had written across two pages of his notebook. It read:

I WANT TO CONNECT!!!!!!

"That's my prayer," he said.

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



Then he told me about his other prayer. He quietly told me of how some days he will walk down to the lake, take off his clothes, and then wade out until he finds the right spot. Then he will just lie back in the water and stare up at the sky.

"When I float there," he said, "I feel like I'm a part of it all. I feel like I'm connecting with the universe. It's my prayer, you could say."

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

To many men "the tie that binds" is the tight piece of fabric around your neck that becomes associated with serious business and serious religion. In fact, the word "religion" comes from the latin root religare, which means "to tie fast" or "to bind." It is the same root as the word "ligament"—that which holds your bones together. Good religion, in this sense, is not rigid formality, but that which connects. Connects us to God, to each other, and to the creation in a way that fosters shalom or relational harmony.

Technology may mediate with incredible speed and the promise of financial gain, but good religion connects for deeper purposes. Communion and community — a coming together, a sharing, only happen when we are touched by God in the incarnated Christ, when we are touched by each other in mutual care, and when we are in touch with the rhythms of creation. This does not automatically happen, though, when your bottom is connecting with a wooden pew and the tie that binds is hanging from your neck. We need to connect with others in relationships of trust that draw people to the love of God. And that touch is warm.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.



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Arts/Media

Television Review

A new *Cosby Show* on the horizon?

Ron DeBoer

When NBC's "The Cosby Show" aired its last episode in 1992, star Bill Cosby said viewers should feel as though the Cosby family had opened its blinds for a few years to allow the rest of the world to peek in on their lives. "Now, we are closing the blinds," Cosby said when the show ended. Since then, viewers have been waiting for the return of a values-laden family half-hour comedy.

A tragically funny quest

Producers of ABC's new situation comedy "My Wife and Kids," starring Damon Wayans, think they have raised the blinds on a new family — the Kyles. In "My Wife and Kids," Damon Wayans plays Michael Kyle, an introspective father of three, who in the show's April 1 debut ponders, "What happened to my life?" His stay-home wife has become a stock market wizard; his son likes rap stars and basketball players more than him; his moody,



Damon Wayans

say show producers, "is on a tragically funny quest for a traditional family." Tragic because he has discovered his kids have been ensnared in a world of TV stars and fashion models and Michael wants good old-fashioned respect and family values. Star Wayans says he'd "like to follow in the cardigan-friendly style of 'The Cosby Show' but also deal a little more with the problems of today." While the show can be commended for the issues it tackles, Michael Kyle's weak parenting skills and ego-maniacal character need to change if this show is to be comparable to the *Cosby Show*.

"My Wife and Kids" does address important issues with which

adolescent daughter is embarrassed of him, and his youngest daughter gives him attitude.

"Wayans' character,"

families struggle. While the episode of Kyle Junior's use of marijuana can't be considered fresh material, the lessons about the pressures of media were new and genuine. Take another example: Michael's daughter needs a new bra, and he, of course, volunteers to take her to the lingerie store. Because the show focuses on the comedic antics of Damon Wayans, he pretends a bra is a sling-shot and puts underwear over his eye and hobbles around the mall like a pirate, much to his daughter's horror. But later, when she insists on the importance of breast-size for teenage girls, Michael in a tender scene tells her that what's on top — in her head — that's what counts.

Family built around star

In another plot-line, Junior Kyle expresses his admiration for NBA basketball players, so Michael, in a typical comic routine, impersonates several star basketball players to make the point that basketball players are not to be worshipped. In future episodes,

sibling topics, mother-daughter tension and allowance issues will be explored.

Wayans is hilarious as the show's main star. Like Cosby, who often used the show as a platform for his comic routines, everything on the set seems to stop when Wayans' character launches into a stand-up routine about aging or when he delivers a series of sight gags. On his own, there is no actor on TV funnier than Damon Wayans; however, whether because of weak writing or weak acting, Wayans' interaction with the other members of his TV family seems stilted. He doesn't fit a natural role in the everyday running of the household. He is the "star" of the family, the focus around which everyone else must bow. As the show's title, "My Wife and Kids," implies, everyone exists for Michael's purposes.

As a result, Michael's fundamental approach to fathering is deeply flawed. He is a far cry from Bill Cosby's character in the old "Cosby Show." Michael treats his

children with disrespect, exposing their fears and embarrassments for his own pleasure and witticism. When his daughter expresses the need for a bra, he immediately quips, "for those mosquito bites?" Funny? I guess in an adolescent way. Appropriate for a father who claims to understand his daughter's feelings? I think not. He is also insensitive to, competitive with and controlling of his son, who, at one point, is provoked enough by his father's verbal assaults to want to fight him.

Wayans wants his character to be cardigan-friendly — and the show has the potential to be excellent. But to depict the traditional view of parenting, his character needs to grow up. His sarcasm, anger, and unpredictable antics put him more in the class of Will Smith on the old "Prince of Bel Air" comedy than of Bill Cosby. If his character is re-written over the summer, perhaps the fall will bring us a show that is wholesome and a father who is an admirable role model.

Providence players use drama as Christian ministry

Alan Doerksen

OTTERBURNE, Man. — Christian drama is important "because our society is increasingly becoming a visual society," says Sara Pasiciel, associate professor of drama at Providence College and Seminary, in Otterburne, Manitoba. Pasiciel leads Providence Players, an acting troupe of students from the college and seminary who have been traveling to perform at venues in Manitoba and Ontario for 12 years.

Providence Players are one of several Christian acting troupes which have been gaining popularity in Canada over the past few years. Others include Toronto-based Brookstone Performing Arts, and Wycliffe Associates — an acting troupe connected with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Providence Players began 17 years ago as King's Connection, and later changed their name, explains Pasiciel. The main purposes of the troupe are "to reach out and to go into churches and schools" and help Christians, especially young ones, to better understand their faith, she explains. Troupe members can gain "education on how drama can be used as ministry," as well as experience with drama.

The troupe "provides an opportunity for students gifted in the dramatic arts to develop their talents in a godly and effective way,"



PROVIDENCE COLLEGE & SEMINARY

Members of the Providence Players (from left): Tim Horch, Rhea Parker, Meg Pfeifer, Matt Berube, and Emily Kipe.

states a Providence College press release. The actors also "provide a support ministry for already existing church programs."

Pasiciel stresses the importance of Christian drama, which she sees as more important and involving than the visual medium of television. "There's something about live drama which involves people a bit more," she asserts. More and more, churches are

becoming involved with drama, she observes.

God Appointed a Worm

Providence Players perform a variety of dramas each year, about one-third of which Pasiciel writes. Providence students write some dramas, while others come from a variety of sources. Recently, the troupe performed *God Appointed a Worm* (written by Robert Hughes).

"It tells the story of Jonah in an entertaining way," says Pasiciel, explaining that the worm is the one which eats the vine which was giving shade to Jonah.

Pasiciel has also written a play called *The Answer*, which has an evangelical message explaining the urgency of making a commitment to God.

In March, Providence Players presented the drama *Quiet in the Land* at Providence College Chapel. In February and early March, Providence Players toured northwestern and southern Ontario for 12 days, performing a variety of short sketches centred around the theme of living Christ-like lives in a complicated world. The troupe

also has at least six performances a year in southern Manitoba.

Providence Players perform at a variety of venues, including at church youth group events, at Christian schools, church dinner or dessert theatre evenings, and at city-wide praise and worship events. The troupe has also performed at a Ralph Bell crusade youth event in Winnipeg, at drama workshops and conferences, and at public schools.

Providence College is a 75-year-old non-denominational Christian College which describes its mission as "to educate students at a university level to think, live and serve effectively as Christians in the church and in society."

Burlington,

Ontario

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This award-winning Senior Citizen Homes is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation.

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Church

Nigerian States urged to enforce Islamic law

KANO, Nigeria, (Zenit.org) — Nigeria's top Islamic council assailed northern states for not enforcing strict Islamic law after adopting it as law, Reuters reports.

The National Council of Ulama declared that Zamfara was the only one among six northern states to apply the Muslim law correctly.

Last January, Zamfara was the object of international protests for sentencing a 17-year-old girl to 100 lashes, for being pregnant out of wedlock. The girl said the pregnancy was the result of rape.

Hypocritical about it

Sheikh Umar Ibrahim Kobo, president of the Council of Ulama of the state of Kano, said that most of the states are enforcing a "caricature" of the law to attract the votes of Muslim followers, but the law does not affect the life of non-Muslims. "They have been hypocritical about it," Kobo said during a meeting of

Islamic scholars.

Praising the successes of Zamfara, the group appealed for the full and immediate enforcement of the Shariah in all the states that adopted the code.

Turning a blind eye

The participants in the meeting, which was organized by the Independent Hisba of the state of Kano — which calls itself the police of the Shariah — did not say what they would do if state governments fail to apply the Islamic law. The Ulama said that, although some states were beginning to prohibit alcohol, betting and prostitution, they turned a blind eye to other practices such as begging and the black market.

The move to enforce the Shariah has created difficulties in parts of Nigeria, whose population of more than 110 million includes a great number of Christians and animists.

In the past, Catholic President

Olusegun Obasanjo, of southern Nigeria, has condemned the enforcement of the Shariah. When the Shariah was established in Kaduna, Monsignor John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan said that "the problem is that there [are some] who fan the fire to destroy democracy. There are circles that do not like the policy of President Obasanjo, and they use the religious problem to get him into difficulty."

"Those anti-Obasanjo circles have contacts abroad and use the problem of the Shariah to anger spirits," Monsignor Onaiyekan added. "It is no accident that the ambassador of Saudi Arabia attended the ceremony to introduce the Shariah in Zamfara, yet there was no representative of the Nigerian central government. Everyone knows that Saudi Arabia has promised economic aid to the states that establish the Islamic law. Yet previously, it never helped Nigeria."

their case at the Pretoria High Court.

However, despite the fact that Nevirapine is now considered legal, the health minister, Manto Tshabala-Msimang, last week restated that South Africa would not supply anti-retrovirals to all HIV-positive people. She indicated that she would use the 1997 law to purchase generic versions (copies) of drugs used to treat the infections that arise from AIDS. One church in Johannesburg has already raised 70,000 rands (\$8,750 U.S.) for God's Babies. Cox said he had been particularly touched by a gesture from 20 students who pooled 25 rands each for an infected mother and child.

this country there is a gulf between communities. We hope this scheme will be relational. We hope to take photographs of the babies and create a database so that people can identify with the child they have helped.

"We want to link the parishes to the mothers. These women are going to die, and their children will need continued help. This could be the start of something big, though for now we are still merely looking at the moment of birth and do not yet have sponsors to pay the expenses of a co-ordinator," said Cox, a volunteer layman.

Until last week, when the government-controlled Medicines Control Council finally cleared Nevirapine for licensed use in South Africa, some public clinics, with the help of God's Babies and medical charities, had been covertly administering the drug, which is believed to be effective in about 40 per cent of cases.

There has been speculation that the government delayed the licensing of the drug, made by Boehringer-Ingelheim, as a lever in its battle against pharmaceutical companies who wanted to challenge a South African law that allows the health ministry to shop around for cheap medicines. Last week, the 39 multinational pharmaceutical companies withdrew

Alex Duval Smith

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (ENI) — South African Anglicans have launched a fund-raising appeal, in defiance of the country's government, to provide a drug which reduces the risk of pregnant, HIV-positive women transmitting the virus to their children at birth.

The controversial move, by the 60 parishes of the Johannesburg diocese, comes amid mounting criticism of the government's slowness in responding to a health emergency which has already seen an estimated 4.7 million South Africans — or one in nine people — infected with the virus that leads to AIDS.

God's Babies

Under the diocese's program, called God's Babies, churches are being asked to raise 500 rands (\$63 U.S.) per pregnant mother to cover the cost of administering an anti-retroviral drug called Nevirapine in the hours before birth, and formula milk to the newborn child.

Bart Cox, the HIV-Aids co-ordinator for the Johannesburg diocese, said: "It is a scandal that the government has not taken this step, and I think the church has a prime responsibility — a mandate — to help the next generation."

"People want to help. But in

Website invites lapsed Catholics to return

(Religion Today) — The website www.OnceCatholic.org is a first-of-its-kind Internet version of the "Come Home" programs found at many parishes and dioceses, which seeks to bring prodigal sons and daughters back to the Catholic church, according to *The Cincinnati Post*.

Dan Andriacco, a spokesman for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, said, "A lot of people who are inactive Catholics may be so embittered or embarrassed that they don't feel comfortable going to a representative of the church. Through cyberspace, they each can approach the other, in a non-threatening way." The Rev. Pat McCloskey, an initiator of the project, said, "We're doing what St. Francis of Assisi did — but with new technology. He himself dealt with a lot of people who were alienated from the Catholic Church of his day."

The home page of OnceCatholic.org has eight categories reflecting the main reasons people leave the church — "Marriage Issues," "Abortion/ Post-Abortion," "Church Teaching" and others. Clicking on one of the categories allows visitors to access needed information.

Catholics and U.S. Presbyterians confer on meaning of church

VATICAN CITY (Zenit.org) — Over the past year, unexpected progress was made in the ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), despite continued differences on important points.

Rethinking role of Pope

In a meeting held in the Vatican March 20-21 between a delegation of the 2.7-million-member Presbyterian Church and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity discussion centred on John Paul II's proposal in the encyclical "Ut Unum Sint," which expresses his willingness to rethink the role of the Bishop of Rome.

The Presbyterian Church responded with a document entitled "The Successor to Peter," which was discussed with the Pope's

senior collaborator for ecumenical affairs, Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, and his successor, Cardinal Walter Kasper.

During the Rome meeting, "various aspects of the Petrine ministry" proper to the Pope were examined. The discussion centred on the widest concept of the church of each of the two Christian confessions.

Although the representatives said that Catholics and Presbyterians are united "by faith in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Redeemer, and in the Trinity," they acknowledged that substantial differences exist "in understanding the nature of the Church," and the exercise of authority.

However, the representatives of both confessions said that the desire for unity is alive, encouraging them to continue in the ecumenical way, by addressing additional issues in future meetings, including:

- the possibility of Reformed participation in the ecumenical consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification, building on the recent Catholic-Lutheran agreement;

- the possibility of reaching, at the appropriate level, a mutual recognition of the sacrament of baptism;

- and the continuing joint study of the events in the 16th and 17th centuries which led to the divisions.

Chinese authorities crack down on underground priests

BEIJING, China (EP) — Chinese police arrested 79-year-old bishop Shi Enxiang, a leader of the underground Chinese Roman Catholic Church. According to the *Washington Post*, Shi had been in hiding from authorities for the past five years. He was arrested April 13 while on a visit to Beijing. Shi has already spent almost 30 years in prison for his religious beliefs and activities. The state-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Church does not recognize the authority of the Vatican or the Pope, and is instead controlled by the government.

Church

Indian census discriminates against 'untouchable' Christians

Abhijeet Prabhu

BANGALORE, India (Compass) — Indian Christians from Dalit (untouchable) and other backward castes will have their identities permanently erased and state benefits withdrawn if the registrar general of India, and Census Commissioner Mr. Jayant K. Banthia, have their way in the latest census of India.

Great identity theft

"The great Indian census has turned into a great identity theft as tens of millions of Dalits and tribals are forced into religious identities dictated neither by law nor by statute, but purely by the bigotry of a partisan government and the cultural illiteracy of a pliant bureaucracy," John Dayal, director of the Center for Policy Research and Communication and Secretary General of the All India Christian Council, told Compass.

The only religion choices available to a Scheduled Caste or Dalit Indian citizen on the census is between the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist faiths. He is not allowed to claim that he belongs to the Christian, Muslim, animist, indigenous, agnostic, or no-faith categories.

The controversy centres around two major sets of instructions of the census manual, which instructs census enumerators: "The Scheduled Tribe can belong to any religion. However, the Scheduled Caste can only belong to Hindu or Sikh or Buddhist religion."

Dalit Christians could lose benefits

According to Ebenezer Sunderraj of the Indian Missions Association, 65 per cent of all Christians in India are Dalits. "Therefore, the words 'Dalit' and 'Christian' are almost synonymous," he says. Eliminating the

Dalit identities of these Christians will mean that they are deprived of economic benefits and cannot take advantage of special quotas in employment, which are open only to Dalits hailing from Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist religions.

Further, the policy of barring Dalit Christians from receiving state benefits discourages Dalits from converting to Christianity. Dalits in India have suffered oppression at the hands of the upper castes for over three millennia and continue to do so. A number of Dalits who have accepted the Christian faith are thus reluctant to register themselves as Christians for census purposes and continue to register themselves in terms of the identities of their former religions to ensure that they continue to receive the benefits they are entitled to. This, however, skews the census figures in terms of the respective populations of religious

groups in India.

In parts of India, Dalit women continue to be raped, their huts burned and the men subjected to the most dehumanizing tasks, even carrying human waste on their heads in some villages of Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. Mass conversions to Christianity have taken place among Dalits, who have found it a religion that promises them true human dignity. Tragically, they are now doubly discriminated against for being Dalits as well as for being Christians.

Taking census to court

Meanwhile, the All India Christian Council served legal notice on the registrar general of India on February 14, saying it would take the census to court. It is demanding that secondary questions on religion not be asked of Scheduled Castes.

Simultaneously, tribal leaders from Madhya Pradesh and other regions complained that local enumerators were not listing tribal Christians under the Scheduled Tribes, seriously jeopardizing their future, apart from injuring their

identity, their sole possession.

Ultior political motives

The All India Christian Council alleges that there are ulterior political motives in several questions, and a blatant attempt has been made to communalize the entire census operation, vitiating the exercise and seriously compromising its accuracy. It also expressed its deep apprehension of the government's motives in dictating that those people who declare they belong to a Scheduled Caste must choose their religion from only three categories arbitrarily fixed by the government.

Christian Dalits and Dalits belonging to other minorities have since 1950 consistently challenged the Presidential Ordinance, which struck the first blow against the secular statutes that had been created by the founding fathers of the republic to enable Dalits to compete on a level field in the newborn nation. The Sikhs and the Buddhists, who also had been robbed of their birthright, regained those rights after a long and sustained struggle. The struggle of Dalits of other faiths continues.

The spiritual value of play

"Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'" The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and every thing in them." Psalm 96:1-12

Recently I have re-discovered the spiritual value of play. My life, like so many of yours, is packed full of lots of things I have to do. But if I only concentrate on those things, my life gets out of balance. As strange as it may sound, I have found that I do better on the things I have to do if I spend time doing things that I don't have to do, but want to.

An hour of kayaking clears my head enough to go to a strategic planning meeting. A good swim helps me work through the frustrations of life and leaves me with a healthier perspective. Reading "Yertle the Turtle" to my nephew and nieces reminds me of the importance of investing in life-long relationships (and to not let people pile things on my back in an effort to make themselves look better. Lots of lessons in Dr. Seuss.).

The world will continue to spin

But I think what play does for me more than anything else is to remind me that everything is not up to me. The world will continue to spin if I take an hour and run around the park with my dog. The church I serve will not come to a screeching halt if I sit outside and read *Calvin and Hobbes*. Life can go on just fine without me, and in some cases even better. Play reminds me that I am God's child, and that if I take off my shoes and go wading through a creek looking for tadpoles, he's got the rest of the world covered.

Play draws me back into those wonderful

Chapter & Verse

Rev. Mary S. Hulst



summer afternoons of youth, where the day stretched long and the adventures awaited and when my siblings and neighbors and I were through exploring the world, we could go home and be fed and washed and tucked in bed with a story and a prayer.

God created us to play

Play reminds me that I am God's child. He wired me this way, so that I would take delight in a softball game or in a walk by the lake or in watching my little friend Sheila Grace maneuver her six month old body in such a way so as to hit the button on her toy which makes it light up and play music. God created us to play.

When we play, we are once again surrendering control of this universe to the One who created it. We are saying that we can afford to take a little time off here and there, because our God has things under control. To be playing Christians is to declare God's sovereignty: it's not up to me or to you, it's up to him.

To play regularly allows a person to hold a little more loosely to the things of this world and hold a little more tightly to the hand of our Father.

Go out, now, today, and play. Run around, laugh out loud, play tag, jump in a creek, build with legos, take a walk — just get out there and declare God's sovereignty to the world. Play!



Rev. Mary S. Hulst is pastor of East Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Amharic Bible opens God's Word to Ethiopia

(Religion Today) — The International Bible Society (IBS) launched its New Amharic Standard Version Bible translation on March 10 at Addis Ababa. For the event, more than 1,000 dignitaries, including church leaders, business leaders and government officials, overflowed the U.N. regional conference hall in Ethiopia.

"In the 10 years since the demise of communism in Ethiopia and the advent of religious freedom, the number of evangelical Christians has grown tremendously," said IBS-Ethiopia National Director Solomon Kebede. "So has the need for

accurate, contemporary Scriptures and study materials in their national language (Amharic) for the 65 million people in Ethiopia."

IBS released the new translation in seven editions, one of which is a study Bible with thousands of explanatory notes, maps, charts and other helps. The study Bible is the first of its kind in any African language.

The new translation is "a golden legacy to God's people in my generation and the one to come," explained one translator. "This is especially true because 48 per cent of the people are under 16."

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Opinion/Agriculture

The new meaning of tolerance

Alex Buchan

"It is important to notice that when tolerance is enjoined upon us nowadays, it is often in the sense of indifference: We are asked, in effect, to refrain from expressing — or indeed holding — any opinion, and sometimes even to condone every conceivable type of behavior or opinion in others." (Leszek Kolakowski)

This Polish philosopher, Leszek Kolakowski, identified a major change in the cultural climate of the West, one that may well result in the Western church joining the ranks of the persecuted sooner rather than later. The definition of toleration has changed!

Tolerance now means refraining from judgment

Traditionally, toleration meant that the state could not use force to impose the dominant religion. But recently, toleration has become synonymous with indifference, that is, one must refrain from assuming that deeply held differences over moral and religious matters are important. Instead, one must refrain from judgment. The belief behind this new definition is that all moral views and religious views are basically similar.

Thus Christians who say that Hindus who do not know Christ are "in darkness," or who maintain that practicing homosexuals cannot be ordained, are now guilty of

intolerance. It is a definition beginning to be written into law. A new Human Rights Act promulgated this year in the European Union will not allow churches to refuse a candidate for any job on the grounds that they are practicing homosexuals. Such a refusal would be contrary to the spirit of equality.

But equality is a term evacuated of moral consideration.

Christians may suffer in the future because they will become the first victims of this new intolerance. Kolakowski instances the whole homosexuality debate. Homosexual lobbies demand that the churches withdraw their teaching on the subject, and this pressure can extend to aggressive pestering and even persecution.

But "who is being intolerant here? Homosexuals who maintain that the church is in error are free to leave it. But when they want to impose their own opinions on the church, they are not protecting tolerance but advocating intolerance."

The recent marriage between Christian advocacy groups and human rights organizations may well become annulled as the two groups realize they bring totally different values to define toleration and equality. The West will join the ranks of the persecuted because the one thing we can never afford to be is indifferent.

Axle and axis

For most of a day I searched through Edmonton looking for a simple axle and wheel hub replacement for my manure spreader. The parts looked like an ordinary trailer assembly available almost anywhere.

As ordinary as the parts are, nevertheless I spent the day wheeling into spring, trailer and axle specialty shops, farm supply and farm dealership stores, machine shops and auto supply stores with no success. Nowhere could I find a shank and spindle with hub to match mine.

Perhaps I should have visited outlying towns instead, but that would have meant many more miles and less concentration of services. Furthermore, Edmonton has always advertised itself as supplier to the frontier ("gateway to the North") so surely primary products ought to be available there in quantity.

Edmonton aside, Alberta has rapidly become the most urbanized province in Canada. The countryside has virtually been vacated in favor of city dwelling. The attitude of too many citizens of Alberta has become nine-to-five, no-rain-on-our-picnic, and food-comes-from-the-store.

Government milking the cash cow

Government interest in agriculture, too, seems mainly metaphoric. That is, the oil and gas industry is the government's cash cow right now and they are preoccupied with milking it. Anxious to have the reputation of good fiscal management, Premier Klein and his cabinet promote the exploitation of the highly saleable non-renewable resources.

The premier of Alberta recently stated publicly that he does not understand agriculture. Our governments seemingly only follow the trends anyway. There is not a lot of statesmanship. For instance, the Klein administration has of late been handing out cash to farmers. It's like tossing a coin to a panhandler on the street. That is, it is not the kind of help needed, but it makes the donor feel good and keeps the beggar quiet for awhile.

Our governments, so anxious to sell off our oil and gas for a quick buck, are not concerned either with long-term food-producing capacity. There is no legislation to protect prime agricultural land. As a result, municipalities are competing to convert agricultural land to industrial and country residential use.

Fox in charge of henhouse

Government has abandoned its regulatory role by either downgrading standards in favor of industry or turning regulation over to industry itself — the fox in charge of the henhouse. Governments are ducking out of accountability for long-term or permanent damage to agricultural capability.

Farmland is allowed to be a "sink" for horrendous concentrations of toxic and otherwise harmful chemicals coming to rest from oil and gas installations and other industry. The serious degradation of soil and crops, illness and death of farm animals and even farmers and their families seem to be of little consequence to those in power.

The average citizen would seem to agree with government mismanagement by the fact both provincial and federal governments were returned with overwhelming majorities in recent elections.

Understandably, the machine shops I visited on my odyssey around Edmonton were all very busy with oil and gas production-related work. All of

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

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A liquid manure spreader.

them were willing to install the needed parts if I had them, but I would have had to wait for at least a week.

The large farm dealership was a bust partly because lawn and garden and large industry have become such a huge part of their business.

Having said all I have about society's dangerous axis (axle?) of materialism, there are, however, some heartening counter actions. Firstly, the majorities governments received in recent elections on closer scrutiny were not reflective of the popular vote. Many more voters showed dissatisfaction with government than seat distribution would indicate.

Effective citizen action

Secondly, recent citizen action here has effectively challenged the idea that more big industry and cash flow are all-important. Significant resistance on the part of country-dwellers and farmers has forced four municipalities to postpone adding 940 square hectares of the best agricultural land in the West to an already large industrial area along the N. Saskatchewan River. Concern is for the loss of good farmland and adding more pollution to an area already one of the most polluted in Canada.

Finally, a respected "think-tank", the Pembina Institute, from near Edmonton has published a study on the quality of life in Alberta, from which it concludes that there has been a steady decline over the past forty years. The Institute used a total of 51 indicators to arrive at its conclusion, attempting to include all of life, in contrast to the usual GDP (gross domestic product) measure which accounts only for the number of dollars changing hands. The GDP measurement indicates remarkable "growth" over the last few decades, but, for instance, would consider an auto collision a plus because of the financial expenditure, whereas the Pembina Institute counts it a cost.

Coming back to resolving the manure spreader axle predicament, I finally did get some satisfaction. Towards the end of the day and near the end of my rope, I stopped at a small trailer and axle business. The proprietor took some measurements and phoned Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. "You have to go to Saskatchewan for agricultural parts," he advised me.

The parts were installed the day they arrived from Saskatchewan. I had the work done, not by a

machine company in the city, but by one in the country, which, by the way, also is busy with oil and gas work, but made time for a small agricultural job.



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Opinion/News

But who will raise the children?

Anne van Arragon Hutten

Over the years I have sometimes felt like a voice crying in the wilderness when speaking out on the role of women. I have contributed to the Women in Seminary Scholarship Foundation at Calvin Seminary. I not only support the right of women to get an education and to work at a career, I've done my own share of it.

And yet... and yet...

No, I am not planning to backtrack from my view of women as equally capable, equally called. But there are those practical considerations of how to implement the equality. There are the marriages that need to be maintained. There are parental duties to be carried out. There are questions of who takes out the garbage, in other words. There is a price to be paid for the freedom gained by women.

Next generation first and foremost

First and foremost, there is the matter of the next generation. As a mother and grandmother I am increasingly concerned about who is going to raise the children. My sons are marrying women who are quite capable of holding down careers. Fortunately, the mother of my first four grandchildren is staying home with them, and the mother of the next one plans to do the same. I have friends where the father and mother have taken turns over the years in staying home. But they are exceptions in this new world of equality between the sexes.

Are we as Christians doing anything at all to come up with answers to the very real questions that come with feminism?

I simply cannot see that it is good for a child to have both parents working full-time, despite my contention that a woman has a right to a full life. When children are hurt or sad, they need a parent now, not tonight, not on the weekend. Teenagers might never admit it, but they need their parents even more than younger children do. They need parents who have time to listen, who are not too stressed out to offer empathy. I am not sure this is possible when both parents leave home before the school bus comes, and return just before supper-time.

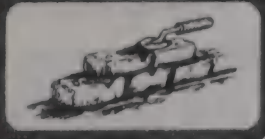
It ain't the whole truth

Second, there is the question of what constitutes a full, rich life for a woman. We've been told for too long that a woman can have it all: career, family, fun, whatever, and life will be marvelous. Sorry, girls, it ain't the whole truth. Holding down a career, whether that be as a corporate lawyer or a clerk in Zeller's, quite often conflicts with the demands of motherhood. As for fun, who has the energy after long days working? And when it comes to feeling empowered by a minimum wage job or in a high-stress corporate career, no, I don't buy it.

Perhaps women feel more useful when bringing cash into the household, but that may just mean they've bought the American Dream without questioning its truth. I spent two decades in the workforce, and although I developed some competence at certain things, nothing comes close to the

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



satisfactions and joys of motherhood. Or to the joy of planting tulip bulbs, for that matter.

Third, who is going to do the volunteer thing if everyone is holding down a paying job? This country is desperate for people willing to give of themselves. We need drivers for people going to cancer clinics. We need canvassers for the Red Cross. We need to visit our seniors. Churches, schools and service organizations need committee members. Those of you who work forty hours or more at a job, do you have the time for that? Or the energy? There is real value in having people around who do not have to be at work at 8:30 every morning.

Weekend marriages

And fourth, what happens when a spouse fails to find satisfactory work and must look elsewhere? Does the other partner give up her job and move with him, does he commute long distance, or do they settle for a weekend marriage? I know of young couples studying at universities in different provinces towards very different careers. How can they ever settle the issues of where to live, or whose work will take priority, if both insist on a career? Can marriages survive under these circumstances?

In summary, it would be nice if men and women could have fully equal rights and equal responsibilities. But somewhere something will have to give. Someone is going to pay the price, and I worry that this, too often, is the child. Dare I say that there are some real advantages to the old system of men at work, women at home?

A temporary blip

(Of course, those who promote this as the only model for families are denying the reality of history. The post-World War II suburban family was a temporary blip in the longer scheme of things. Women have more often worked as hard as men, even while raising their brood under adverse conditions.)

My point is this: are we as Christians doing anything at all to come up with answers to the very real questions that come with feminism? Can we develop a model for family life, for the larger society, that addresses the need for stability at the centre? Can we admit that paying work is often frustrating, boring, and not even cost-effective when you consider the cost of child care, transportation and wardrobe requirements? Can we work towards a society where both men and women find time to spend with their children, their aging parents, and their disabled neighbor? Can we convince employers to give either parent a longterm sabbatical when the children need it? What I've seen so far of women in the workforce is not encouraging. I see us following the role models seen on North American television more often than the one found in Proverbs 31.

Anne van Arragon Hutten is a farmer and writer in the Annapolis Valley.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at 1-780-473-0970 or email at: vanandel@oanet.com.

Australian church opens injecting room in Sydney

SYDNEY, Australia (ENI) — A court decision has opened the way for one of Australia's leading churches, the Uniting Church, to set up the world's biggest legal heroin injecting room in Sydney's red light district.

The room is to be operated by the church under licence from the state government of New South Wales as part of an 18-month trial aimed at preventing the 358 fatal

overdoses that occur on average each year in the state. Addicts will not be provided with the drug, but will be allowed to inject under medical supervision.

Up to 200 injections of drugs are expected to take place daily in the room, which will be open for eight hours a day and staffed by nurses and drug-and-alcohol counsellors.

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Development

Grameen: capitalism for the poor

Harry der Nederlanden

One day, as my colleague and I are making our rounds in Jobra, we stopped at a badly run-down house to watch a woman working with bamboo, making a stool.

She squats on the dirt floor of her veranda under the low, rotten, thatched roof of her house, totally absorbed in her work. She holds the half-finished stool between her knees while plaiting the strands of bamboo cane.

Children are running around naked in the yard. Neighbors appear and stare at us, wondering what we are doing here.

Utter destitution

In her early twenties, thin, with dark skin, black eyes, she is wearing a red sari. Her name is Sufia Begum and she is 21 years old, but she could be any one of a million women who labor every day from morning to night in utter destitution.

'Do you own this bamboo?' I ask her.

'Yes.'

'How do you get it?'

'I buy it.'

'How much does the bamboo cost you?'

'Five taka.'

'That's 13 pence.'

'Do you have five taka?'

'No, I borrow it from the paikars.'

'The middlemen? What is your arrangement with them?'

'I must sell my bamboo stools back to them at the end of the day, to repay my loan. That way what is left over to me is my profit.'

'How much do you sell it for?'

'Five taka and 50 paise.'

'So you make 50 paise profit?'

She nodded.

'That's a profit of just over a penny.'

'Couldn't you borrow the cash and buy your own raw material?'

'Yes, but the money-lender would demand a lot. And people who start with them only get poorer.'

'How much do the money-lenders charge?'

'It depends. Sometimes they charge 10 per cent per week. I even have a neighbor who is paying 10 per cent per day.'

Virtually a slave

Sufia sets to work again. She does not want to lose any time talking with us. I watch her small, brown hands plaiting the strands of bamboo as they had every day for months and years on end. This is her livelihood. She squats barefoot on the hard mud, her fingers callused, her nails black with grime.



Yunus saw that destitute women were quicker to adapt to self-help programs than men and more disciplined and hard-working, so he developed his Grameen banks with them.

It struck me that Sufia's status as virtually a bonded slave was never going to change if she could not find that five taka to start with. Credit could bring her that money. She could then sell her products in a free market and could get a much better spread between the cost of her materials and her sale price.

The next day I called in a university student who collected data for me, and I asked her to assist me in making a list of how many in Jobra, like Sufia, were borrowing from traders and missing out on what they should have been earning from the fruits of their labors.

Within a week, we had prepared a list: 42 people who in total had borrowed 856 taka, a total of less than £17.

'My God, my God, all this misery in all these 42 families because of the lack of £17!' I exclaimed.

My mind wouldn't let this problem lie. I wanted to be of help to these 42 able-bodied, hard-working people. I kept going round and round the problem, like a dog worrying his bone. If I lent them £17, they could sell their products to anyone; they could then get the highest possible return for their labor, and would not be limited to the usurious practices of the traders and money-lenders.

So I lent them £17 and said they could repay me whenever they could afford to. Over the next week, it struck me that what I had done was not sufficient because it was only a personal and emotional solution. I had simply lent £17, but what I had to do was to provide an institutional solution.

That was the beginning of it all. I was not trying to become a money-lender. I had no intention of lending money to anyone; all I

really wanted was to solve an immediate problem. Even to this day I still view myself, my work and that of my colleagues, as devoted to solving the same immediate problem: the problem of poverty which humiliates and denigrates everything that a human being stands for.

Economics prof helps the starving

The "I" of this story is Muhammad Yunus. At the time, in the early 1970s, he was a professor of economics teaching at Chittagong University in Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world. Although he greatly enjoyed teaching economics and the elegant theoretical answers it provided to complex questions, he was frustrated that his theories provided no way to help the poor who were starving at his very doorstep.

It was by venturing out among the poor and looking closely at how they struggled – creatively – to eke out a living that he began to learn. But first, he confesses, he had to unlearn a lot. He had to unlearn the established wisdom that the poor were a bad credit risk because they could provide no collateral and because their needs would override pressure to pay back the loan.

Yunus discovered that although they have no collateral, the poor are a better risk than the rich, because they know that this may be their only chance to pull themselves out of poverty. Of course, he also made sure that he imposed a discipline of repayment on them, one they could manage quite easily. And if they ran into problems, he provided advice, assuming they

did not wish to default. At first he established a daily repayment schedule, but since most were illiterate he drew up no legal papers and never had recourse to the police. The relation between lender and borrower, he insists, is based wholly on trust.

Trust was justified

He found that this trust was justified, as the repayment rate has been close to 100 per cent. A huge segment of his loans go to women. In Bangladesh, as in many poor countries, poverty affects women the most. Her place is insecure even in her own home in Muslim society, for her husband can divorce her simply by saying so three times. She is not taught to read and write and her movement in the marketplace is limited. Yunus saw that destitute women were quicker to adapt to self-help programs than men and more disciplined and hard-working, so he developed his Grameen banks with them.

By lending money to mainly destitute, illiterate women to give them greater independence, he has built up a business that now circulates many millions in microcredit, which is what lending small sums has come to be called. In recent years, too, economists and universities have begun to pay attention to Yunus' incontrovertible success. Several conferences and courses have been held in different parts of the world to study his techniques and extend them to different cultures.

Banks should and can lend to the landless poor, he never tires of repeating, and not just out of altruism but because it is good business. He is all in favor of the free market (capitalism) – if it is

accessible to the poor, for then it can help the poor by giving them the opportunity to use their own knowledge, creativity and hard work.

Grameen's customers must form their own group of five people, all from different families. They sign nothing, but they must decide who will be the first two to apply for loans and what they should be for. Loans are for a year. Repayments start a week later, at two per cent of the capital, plus 20 per cent annual interest, so their tiny ventures must earn income fast.

Mutual support and peer pressure

Grameen staff go to the villages, collecting weekly payments in public meetings. If the first two keep up their payments, the next two get loans, and finally the group's chairman. If one defaults, the others get nothing. The group is a source of mutual support; and also of peer pressure.

They must also learn the Grameen rules by heart. Grameen has sometimes been criticized for "paternalism" because of this, but the village borrowers recite them with pride.

Each borrower undertakes to:

1. Follow the four Grameen principles: discipline, unity, courage, hard work.
2. Build family prosperity.
3. Repair and improve their houses.
4. Grow vegetables year-round, eat plenty and sell the surplus.
5. Plant seedlings each year.
6. Plan to keep families small, minimize expenditures, look after their health.
7. Educate their children and ensure that they can earn enough to pay for that education.
8. Always keep their children and the environment clean.
9. Build and use pit-latrines.
10. Take care to drink only tube-well, purified or boiled water.
11. Neither ask for nor give dowries for daughters; not practise child marriage.
12. Commit no injustice, and oppose those who do.
13. Collectively undertake larger investments for higher incomes.
14. Be ready to help each other. If anyone is in difficulty, the whole Grameen centre (8-10 groups) will help him or her.
15. If any centre breaches discipline, other centres go to help to restore it.
16. Introduce physical exercises in centres; all will participate in social activities.

Development

Banking as a ministry: Oikocredit

Harry der Nederlanden

Oikocredit is another institution like the Grameen banks that grew out of dissatisfaction with the way mainline financial institutions function. During the seventies there were many Christians who did not like to see their investments and their pensions go to institutions that financed the war in Vietnam or Apartheid in South Africa. This gave rise to ethical investment, but it also gave rise to a more positive venture: an alternative bank that extends credit to those unable to borrow elsewhere.

From examples such as the Grameen banks (opposite page), the founders had learned that access to money (capital) can drastically change the lives of the poor for the better and also that the poor are not a poor credit risk. They had also seen that often giving the poor a chance to help themselves with a loan has better results than simply giving them a hand-out. The driving vision behind Oikocredit was to give the poor an opportunity to help themselves by providing them the wherewithal to buy raw materials, seeds and tools and by holding them to a discipline of repayment. Thirty years ago the notion of helping people by lending them money was revolutionary.

Not well-received at first

And not well-received by the churches, which were approached for seed capital. The churches were dubious. Most were committed to giving rather than lending. "Isn't it wrong to lend to the poor?" some asked. Hoping to collect \$10 million, the alternate bank had to be satisfied with \$1 million to begin with. Gradually, however, the idea caught on.

No doubt because of success stories like that of N. Jhansi Raja, who was struck with polio at the age of two, leaving her unable to walk or move her left leg. Such a handicap would be difficult for anyone, but for Jhansi, living in the poor village where she was born, it was devastating.

For the next seven years, her family sought help anywhere they could. But in the process, their small plot of land fell into neglect. No longer able to support themselves and Jhansi, her parents and brothers turned to low paying wage labor. Jhansi, however, was able to attend class with the help of a three-wheeled, hand-powered wheelchair.

Then one year, after suffering heavy losses to their most recent crop, the family was forced to sell a major portion of their land. They were left penniless.

Faced with this crisis, Jhansi



YMCA of Chiang Mai, one of Oikocredit's most successful project partners in Thailand, repaid its loan in 1999. In this project, thousands of women earn a decent living with the production of handicrafts.

decided to take control of her life. She had heard of SHARE, an organization that made small loans, especially to women, enabling them to start up their own businesses. She was determined to make the most of the opportunity. But first she had to convince others in her village to join her to form a lending group. After several disappointments but with encouragement from SHARE staff, she was able to form a working lending group.

Proud to help her family

With her first loan Jhansi opened a small shop selling certain foods and some small fancy items. At first her profits were small, but she was proud to help her family which had supported her for so long. One year after taking out her first loan, she took out a larger loan of 3,500 rupees (\$80 U.S.) and expanded her business, adding vegetables and other fancy items. As she began to make bigger profits, she was even able to take out an agricultural loan to help cultivate her family's remaining land. These loans, which she paid off easily, gave her the confidence to take on more.

With further credit, Jhansi has been able to purchase a buffalo and a chili grinder. Now along with many other products, she sells milk and her own chili powder in her small shop. She is now able to support not only herself but also able to help her family.

Oikocredit does not itself provide credit on such a person by

person basis, but it provides the funds to establish institutions like SHARE, which can. Although the churches themselves were slow to invest, individuals, moved by stories like that of Jhansi and with the vision of transforming banking, began to form Support Associations, which today number 18,000 in 18 different countries. These have provided 75 per cent of the funds which were disbursed to over 350 different "partners". Supporters are not donors; they are investors. They get interest (two per cent) and they can take out their money whenever they need to do so.

This is possible because, although the purpose of Oikocredit is to help those who are poor, it uses all its resources to help them succeed to become profitable. The latter repay their loans with modest interest so that Oiko can continue to fund other viable enterprises. So far their partners have surpassed all expectations, repaying over 85 per cent of all loans.

To gain this level of success Oiko has had to be judicious about where it invests. Although its primary aim is to help the disadvantaged help themselves, Oiko studies how the enterprise will contribute to the economy and well-being of the community where it is located. It may not harm the environment. Preference is given to those enterprises that elevate the condition of women and benefit as many people as possible. Quite a few, then, function as co-operatives. And the project must

be viable, that is, it must be able to get on its own feet in the near future.

Although Oikocredit wants its loans repaid, it does everything it can to make sure the business succeeds. Sometimes, when a business falters Oiko will extend the terms of the loan, it will bring in managerial expertise or draw on the knowledge of development

agencies and look for creative solutions. It does not, like regular banks, bail out in times of crisis.

From hovels to housing

Take the Syalom co-operative of Indonesia, for instance. Its members worked for the Indonesian Bible Society, which could not pay them enough to enable them to afford decent housing. Most lived in hovels of 400 square feet or less. To get better housing they needed access to loans. With the help of Oiko, 60 per cent of Syalom's members were able to get such loans.

Then came the Asian economic crisis and the drastic devaluation of Indonesia's currency. Suddenly their co-operative was unable to meet their payments, for these had to be made in U.S. dollars. Oiko did two things: it extended the loan over a longer term, and it showed the Bible Society how to make extra income by taking on outside printing jobs.

Oikocredit has its headquarters in Amersfoort, the Netherlands, but it has two support associations in Canada—one in Ontario and one in B.C. Both are eager for more members.

To learn more and to read about more of their projects, go online to or write to First Oikocredit Canada, 183 Chedoke Ave., Hamilton, ON L8P 4P2. In the U.S.: Oikocredit U.S.A., 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, N.Y., NY 10115.



COCOPROVI, in Abidjan, is a co-operative of former squatters who used their Oikocredit loan to build permanent market food stores.

Reminiscence

Timothy Christian School: The early years

Ron De Boer

From 1976 to 1979, I lived my life on a postage stamp square of about three acres on Fourth Avenue in Owen Sound, Ontario. On Sundays we travelled by car to First Christian Reformed Church for Sunday services at 10:00 a.m. and again at 2:30 in the afternoon, so the farm families, of which we were one, could get back home in time to milk the cows.

Mondays to Fridays, from a very early hour, we took various school buses to the new Christian school which had popped up beside the church. And at some time during the weekend, we might also find ourselves on the third acre of the postage stamp square.

Land of infinite adventure

My Uncle Joe and Aunt Francis Neerhof owned a nursery — Westside Nursery — which was separated from the school by only a chain-linked fence. On a Friday evening, my older brothers and cousins might entertain us younger kids in games of after-dark-tag or hide-and-go-seek. I remember sitting on the tire swing during recess at Timothy, watching my cousins digging up a shrub for a customer or watering the flowers, swaying in the spring breeze, longing to be free from school and work in the greenhouses. Looking back, I see now that my world was small, but from the eyes of an eleven to thirteen-year-old boy, Fourth Avenue was a land of infinite adventure and excitement!

Westside Nurseries is now gone, of course, moved to another part of town. The church has been renovated and has transformed over the years and doesn't resemble the church of my youth. And Timothy Christian School — which began in the basement of that church — is now a quarter of a century old.

I was in sixth grade when we first assembled in the basement of the church. Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 were crammed into the main hall — where cadet floor-hockey games were played on Friday nights — while the primary grades, 1 through 4, learned in the church nursery amongst riding toys and building blocks. On Monday mornings, the not-so-faint smell of dirty diapers greeted us when we arrived at church and walked down the hall to our classrooms for our lessons.

Our first teacher, who lasted only until Christmas, was wonderful. She allowed us to play outside whenever we wanted and didn't place too many demands on us academically. When her back was turned, the boys flicked paper clips



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

at each other and poked the girls with their rulers. We never had homework and recesses sometimes lasted for half an hour. This teacher had been sent from heaven! How often had I prayed for school like this?

Saturated with scriptural significance

Unfortunately, our parents caught wind of the goings-on in the church underground. One day early in 1977, we arrived at school in our mittens and snowmobile boots to find a different teacher sitting behind the desk. Mrs. Pitman, who served the school for the rest of my stay there, whipped us into shape in a matter of ten minutes. We learned very quickly who was boss and even some math and literature. Mrs. Pitman filled our classroom with anecdotes of the Holy Land, which she had visited the year before. She was a retired teacher from the public school system and a devoted Christian who spoke of her faith often and saturated our studies with scriptural significance.

Mrs. Pitman was an amazing teacher. Not only did she teach four different grades, she was also principal. She had to oversee curriculum, attend board and education committee meetings and prepare lessons for her classes. She had the voice of a drill sergeant and the face of a Supreme Court judge. She taught us discipline and accountability, and modeled to us tireless energy. "You can't pull the wool over my eyes," she'd say to us on more than one occasion.

Or, if she had to deal with administrative duties in the office, she'd return to our noisy classroom and say, "When the cat's away the mice will play, won't they!"

We boys thought we could outsmart Mrs. Pitman by hiding in the boys bathroom. Mrs. Pitman would open the door and call us to class, and we'd slouch out with her standing at the door like a prison guard. Once, we decided to ignore her calls and pretend we weren't in there. Mrs. Pitman marched straight in, glared at us with her hands on her hips — a familiar stance — and hauled us back to the room.

A couple of days later, we thought we'd really show her. Not only would we ignore her calls, we would all line up at the urinals so that when she came in she'd catch us in the act of going to the bathroom. Mrs. Pitman, as usual, called us twice, and when we didn't answer, strode into the bathroom. We were so looking forward to the shocked — even horrified — look on her face. But she simply stood beside us at the urinals and told us we'd better finish right now because she wasn't moving one muscle until we were all in our desks. Our laughter had to wait for the bus ride home, where we re-told the story to each other for the rest of the year.

A glint of amusement

But Mrs. Pitman had a glint of amusement in her eye, even when she was angry. When our definitive class clown — Ron Vanderploeg — was caught

imitating the primary teacher's style of walking, she yelled at him but followed it up with a smile and shake of the head a few moments later. Mrs. Pitman loved kids. And she cared about our growth as Christian students.

One advantage of a small school is that we had hardly any resources — no good gym equipment, no decent playground. But as they say necessity is the mother of invention and we invented all kinds of games during recess. You could give us boys a bean-bag and we'd keep ourselves amused for a couple of days. One year, Mrs. Pitman allowed the grade eights to run the entire Field Day. We dug up pits, hammered nails in two-by-fours for the high jump, and mapped out a track around the playground. She left it all up to us, and we learned a lot. She didn't step in and tell us to do things differently and didn't re-do anything. What a great boost to our confidence as young adolescents!

Mrs. Pitman's presence filled a room — as did her perfume. One of my lasting memories of our dedicated teacher is her strong fragrance. Mrs. Pitman's perfume arrived in the classroom often before she did, and remained long after. I think she wore so much perfume to remind us that while the mice might play, the cat was still nearby. I can summon that lilac smell of hers in a heartbeat.

Then there were the bus rides from Farm Country to the school on Fourth Avenue. I lived on a dairy farm near Keady. The yellow school bus picked us up at

7:40 a.m. The bus belonged to the Catholic school system, so we Christian Reformed kids had to share the bus with tough Catholic kids who swore at their mothers and smoked filter-less cigarettes. Since we CRC kids got on the bus at the beginning of the route, we took over all the back seats while the Catholic kids rode in the front half of the bus. There we drove in silence — CRC kids in the back half, Catholic kids in the front half — for the hour it took to get to the St. Mary's school, where we boarded another bus that dropped us off at Timothy.

A rolling pen of monkeys

In the afternoons, the bus that picked us up from Timothy to bring us to St. Mary's was driven by an old fellow named Mel, who wore the same thing every day: black work-boots, green work-pants, a red and black flannel shirt, a green cap and big thick glasses. It was no mystery why Mel hated the ten minute bus ride from Timothy to St. Mary's. Nearly the whole school — half of which were probably Vanderploegs — got on that bus, and after a full day under Mrs. Pitman's regime, we were a rolling pen of monkeys. It was "No Rules" bus-riding as I remember it. You got anyone you could find in a headlock, you opened the windows and screamed at cars parked beside us. A couple of kids brought shelled peanuts to throw at the open windows of unsuspecting taxis. Mel hardly noticed, but once in a while he'd check his side mirrors to see that no one was behind him then hit the brakes hard so that those of us standing or hanging over the seats went flying. He'd be glaring up at us in the mirror, but there'd be a hint of satisfaction on his face.

The boy with one shoe

Mel never spoke a word to us. He did all his talking with his actions, and the school bus was his favourite tool for communicating to us. He could make that old bus backfire if you were standing behind it, letting off a great fart of exhaust that choked us with carbon monoxide. If he thought you weren't sitting down quickly enough after boarding at Timothy, he'd jerk the bus into drive and send everyone flying into a seat. If the back emergency door buzzer went off (again), he'd swing the bus to the curb, walk to the back, grab a kid — any kid — but usually one of the main culprits, and leave him standing on the street. In the 70s, this was still considered appropriate discipline. I doubt if Mel's

Continued on page 15...

Reminiscence/News

... continued from page 14
actions would wash today.

One day, my brother, Doug, was wrestling with a girl — I think it was Wilma from my class — on the floor when Wilma wrenched his running shoe free. The shoe was tossed around the bus for a while until someone "accidentally" chucked it to the front, hitting Mel on the back of the head. Mel didn't even glance up into his mirror. He simply reached down, grabbed the shoe, slid his window open and threw it out onto the street. No one dared reprimand Mel, of course, because, even as kids, we could see he was a little high-strung. Who knows, he might throw one of us out of a moving school bus! As luck would have it, the transfer bus we boarded at St. Mary's drove down that same street on our way out of Owen

Sound and my brother talked that bus driver into stopping and retrieving his shoe. He was a little worried how it would look walking down the long laneway to our farm house with one shoe.

When we got to St. Mary's, we climbed into our respective transfer buses and simmered down considerably when the Catholic kids streamed on. We became humble and shy "out in the real world" and today I wonder at these factions. Over my three years riding the bus with the Catholics, we learned not so much to tolerate one another, as to ignore each other. I write this with regret. We knew each other's names but seldom addressed each other. We knew a lot about the Catholic kids because they talked about their teachers and the goings-on at their school while we mostly sat silently, watching them

at the front of the bus. We weren't comfortable with kids that didn't go to our school. In fact, I dare say, we regarded them with a touch of condescension. They were "Canadian" kids, as my parents were fond of saying, meaning, "not one of us." "Canadian" people were to be looked on from a distance, which we kids put into action on the bus every morning and afternoon. I'm afraid we weren't really "lights in the world" as we were being taught in the classrooms of Timothy Christian School.

Anticipating a reunion

There are lots of other memories of those years at Timothy Christian. I sometimes think about the relationships we established as children. I haven't spoken with any of my fellow graduates since commencement night. The day

after graduation in June 1979, my parents loaded up a moving van and moved our family to another part of the province. I think about the kids I didn't treat very respectfully, about harsh words spoken to well-meaning teachers, about the girls I liked. I think about my very best friend, Harold Kelly, who was nearly killed in a terrible car accident in eighth grade. Perhaps in May we'll run into each other, 36 year-old versions of our eighth grade selves.

The theme of our 1979 graduation was "Bloom Where You're Planted." At the time, it was just another slogan; we'd been bombarded with many of these in Bible class. Now, I look back and see deep significance in those words. Wherever God places us, whether Owen Sound or Edmonton or Halifax, in whatever vocation or job, married or single, we are to live our lives as individuals who stand out, as Christians who make a difference.

What an apt theme for May 2001 as the Timothy Christian School Community prepares to celebrate 25 years of Christian

schooling. Twenty-five and more years ago, several parents — including my own — got together and sowed the first seeds for Christian education on Fourth Avenue. Over the years, the seeds were fertilized with prayer and financial support, weeded when crises arose, and watered with love, conviction and a desire to maintain alternative education from a Biblical perspective for those who wished it.

Today, Timothy Christian sways beautifully in the breezes of not just Fourth Avenue on a postage stamp-sized few acres, but to a larger community where the seeds of all those graduating classes are scattered and grow themselves.

Congratulations Timothy! I'm proud to be one of the first students in what will, I'm sure, be a long school history.

Ron DeBoer was a member of the Timothy Christian School (Owen Sound) Graduating Class of 1979

Confessions of a B.C.-er

I want the Leafs to win. There, I said it. Strange as it may seem, a lot of us out here want the Leafs to win. As you may know, the Oilers, Canucks, and Senators are out of the playoffs now. They all worked hard but couldn't make it. Which leaves one important question: What is a good Canadian hockey fan to do? Who should we root for?

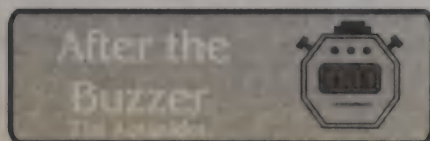
To me, the answer is easy: Toronto. I've had nothing but respect for the Leafs in the 25 years or so that I've been watching hockey. They've played with heart. The fans have been unwavering zealots. I've always wanted to make a pilgrimage to Maple Leaf Gardens (now it'll have to be the Air Canada Centre I suppose). Toronto is a hard-core hockey town and I'll go for the Leafs any time.

It's true that the Leafs are the only Canadian team left in the playoffs, so a Canadian purist doesn't have many other options. Vancouver is fond of the Leafs, though, and always has been.

Toronto, Vancouver not fond of each other

It's interesting because, as cities, Toronto and Vancouver aren't that terribly fond of each other. We like to slag the other town. Vancouver is accused of being the pot-smoking, coffee-swilling irresponsible little brother who spends perfectly good time whittling sculptures out of driftwood and snubbing anything east of Winnipeg. Toronto, on the other hand, is seen as the buttoned-down, uptight older brother who spends his time talking about mutual funds and the next trip to the cottage. The condescension and jealousy fly back and forth (in somewhat of a good-natured way). Silly stuff. There's an interesting rivalry there, though.

Sports allegiances are a strange phenomenon. Personally, I lean towards certain teams because I like how they play or I appreciate what they've gone through. There's a certain mythological level to it. Others align themselves with certain teams out of economic, social, or political convictions. Growing up, I met a number of people who hated



the Montreal Canadiens because of the Quebec separatism issue. It's amazing what lies behind people's feelings towards certain sports teams. A friend of mine despises the Green Bay Packers because a girl from Wisconsin broke up with him at college. He still can't eat cheese either.

Intense rivalry

About three years ago, I wrote a column describing an intense basketball rivalry between the college I went to and one 15 miles down the road. It was beautiful and frightening at the same time (the rivalry, not the column). Now, after I've spent some time writing about the excesses and hype of the sports world, I still find myself interested in that rivalry in Iowa. I check the alumni paper to find out results.

We were made with hearts that seek direction. Our God created us with a need to belong to his Kingdom, but he also gave us a free will. Thousands of years after the Fall, our hearts still crave direction. And there are many forces at work clamoring for our attention. Everyone has a built-in need to believe in something. In a small but tangible way, sports teams provide some of that. Many of us follow sports teams because it gives us something to identify with and believe in. The difficulty is in knowing how to keep the fun and enjoyment of that and avoid making it into an obsessive, pathetic waste of time.

Yessir, I'm a Toronto fan for the rest of the playoffs. It's not just because my wife's from there either.

But it helps.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

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News/Opinion

MISSING: 79 million women South Asia

GENEVA (Zenit.org) — Last month the U.N. Human Rights Commission held its annual session in Geneva. One theme that went largely ignored is the lack of respect for human rights in family planning programs.

The recent decision by American President George W. Bush to deny U.S. funding to organizations involved in abortions drew attention once more to the behavior of the Western-based and -financed groups. Abortion, however, is only one of the problems in the population control efforts promoted by rich countries and the United Nations.

China: torture used to enforce limits

Some reports in recent months have alleged that Chinese authorities are relaxing the one-child limit on families. But the situation is far from clear. Other reports indicate that China continues to abuse individual liberties in enforcing family planning.

Last month Amnesty International published a study on the use of torture by Chinese authorities, and a part of this document examined the birth control policy. Amnesty affirms, "Numerous public reports from China indicate that local annual birth quotas still play a prominent part in the policy, upheld by stiff penalties as well as rewards."

While some exceptions have been made in recent times, the report noted that if women become pregnant without official permission, they could still be punished by heavy fines and dismissal. As well, local officials could be demoted, fired or fined for failing to uphold the plan and quotas.

To enforce the birth control limits, Amnesty said, "officials continue to resort to violence, torture and ill-treatment including physically coerced abortions and sterilizations." Amnesty went on to detail one such case, in Nanhai County, Guangdong province. There, birth control officials last summer were operating illegal detention facilities for pregnant women and relatives of those who did not pay fines. The officials, who acted with impunity, held the detainees for long periods in poor conditions.

Trafficking of women

A related problem in China is the trafficking of women. Due to the push for smaller families, and the traditional preference for male offspring in many areas, brides are now in short supply. This has led to the kidnapping and sale of women, the *Los Angeles Times*

reported Feb. 14, 2001.

The Times said a 1995 study showed that never-married men 20 to 44 years old outnumbered their female counterparts by nearly 2 to 1. Between the ages of 25 and 39, the ratio was 4 to 1. In hard numbers, that is equivalent to a surplus of 26 million single men age 20 to 44 in China.

Because of the steep drop in the proportion of daughters after China's one-child policy took effect in 1979 — due to selective abortion, fatal neglect or outright killing of baby girls — the situation is expected to worsen in coming years.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that in 1999, according to government statistics, 6,800 women were reported abducted or missing and not recovered, a figure experts say is almost certainly too low. An additional 7,660 women were rescued.

Selective abortions

The practice of selectively aborting unborn girls is also present in other Asian countries. Reuters reported Dec. 16 on a study compiled by the Mahbub Ul Haq Human Development Center in Pakistan. According to the study, the growing use of ultrasound and amniocentesis to screen babies' health, which enables parents to learn their offspring's sex early in pregnancy, have facilitated abortions and skewed South Asia's population toward males.

The survey of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives said 79 million women were "missing in South Asia" due to discrimination against females, both before and after birth. The report based its findings of "missing women" on figures that show there are only 94 women for every 100 men in South Asia while the ratio worldwide is 106 women for every 100 men.

Female sterilization

Female sterilization is another way in which women's human rights are being violated by family planning. *The Washington Post* reported Dec. 23 that many Brazilian women now want to reverse their sterilization, but the procedure is costly.

By the early 1980s, sterilization was by far Brazil's No. 1 form of birth control, and played an important part in lowering the country's fertility rate to 2.1 children per woman by the early 1990s.

The Post reported that Brazilian officials acknowledge that the widespread use of sterilization is largely responsible for the country's alarmingly high use of



WORLD BOOK PHOTO BY ROBERT BORJA

There has been a steep drop in the proportion of daughters after China's one-child policy took effect in 1979 — due to selective abortion, fatal neglect or outright killing of baby girls.

Caesarean sections, because sterilizations are often performed after a Caesarean. By 1986, 44 per cent of Brazilian births were performed by Caesarean.

As the number of Caesareans

increased, so did the rate of birth-related deaths among mothers. Brazil's maternal mortality rate peaked at 220 per 100,000 births during the early 1990s, with some cities reporting rates as high as 350 per 100,000 births.

Feminist ideology

In the enthusiasm for limiting population growth, basic human rights are being trampled. In an article in *The World and I* magazine last December, Boston College philosophy professor Laura L. Garcia argued that family planning efforts have been reinforced in many cases by a feminist ideology that con-

siders women's fertility a threat to themselves and to their self-realization.

This ideology has come to dominate the academy and the media in

most Western nations, producing a powerful coalition of well-intentioned but extremely determined social engineers, noted Garcia.

The article observes that the drive to make contraceptives and abortion accessible to every woman is often portrayed as a way of helping women and the human race generally into a more enlightened future. However, continued Garcia, "questions linger over whether this agenda is truly in the interests of women, especially women in cultures less fragmented than in the West."

The emphasis on birth control has also led to neglect of basic health needs in Third World nations. Garcia quoted Leonardo Casco of Honduras, who complains that "in our hospitals and in our health-care system, we have a lot of problems getting basic medicines — things like penicillin and antibiotics. There is a terrible shortage of basic medicines, but you can find the cabinets full of condoms, pills and IUDs." In fact, since 1969, the U.S. Agency for International Development has spent more money on population control programs than on other health programs. In some years, it spent three times more on contraceptive "re-education" than on health care, Garcia commented.

Is CRC good enough for World Council of Churches?

... continued from page 5

The CRC sometimes infuriates or embarrasses me. It has always been a curious and distressing thing for me why the CRC feels so comfortable in evangelical circles while strongly opposing the WCC. My studies and missionary experiences have long ago convinced me of very serious shortcomings of the evangelical movement.

As a long-time missionary in Nigeria, it is my considered opinion that the CRC has seriously shortchanged, even cheated Nigeria, by the strongly evangelical bent of our mission there. Why is the CRC silent about a movement that has obscured, ignored, distorted, failed to recognize, diluted, disgraced, and mocked central parts of the Gospel message?

Harsh words? Indeed. But they are not mine. I have lifted them out of a confession of the evangelical movement itself that starts with "We Confess That All Too Often..." (*Missions as Transformation*, pp. 12-13).

When you use such strongly

negative terms to describe a movement, it strikes some as close to heresy. But it could be argued that CRC participation in such a movement is a dark blot on her history. And again, at least in her missionary arm, her representatives accepted more of that kind of ethos than they provided leadership towards more wholesome and wholistic directions. Their acceptance of the church growth model makes this all too evident.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, a former Calvin professor now at Yale, expressed his deep disappointment with a church that has so emasculated its potentially powerful and radical Calvinist theology. He was an adult, he tells us, before he learned of the radical roots of the CRC tradition. In his *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* he wrote, "Learning of those origins has given me deepened appreciation of my own identity. It has also produced in me a profound discontent over my tradition's loss of its radicalism. Why has it become so quiescently — sometimes even

oppressively — conservative?"

I have long asked the same question.

The bottom line challenge

So I ask those who favor evangelicals but oppose WCC membership: Why have you so long tolerated these self-confessed evangelical aberrations while being so intolerant of the WCC? Honesty and responsible leadership demand that you apply consistent standards in important issues like these.

We need the influence of the WCC desperately to challenge and correct our current almost unnoticeable drift into high middle class economic rationalizations. When it comes to the WCC, perhaps the question is not so much whether the WCC is good enough for the CRC, but, rather the reverse: Is the CRC good enough for the WCC?

After an absence of several years, John Boer is planning to return to Nigeria this summer.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

I CALL MY COLUMN

"Nose for News" for a reason. I am a bit of a gambler, not with money — too dangerous. But with ideas — even more dangerous. How do I do that? I try to visualize certain news events not normally expected. Observing world happenings for years has taught me that we can never extrapolate straight from the current situation to the future. Random occurrences, the unforeseen, the crazy notions nobody has given much thought play a large role in history.

So my inclination is toward lateral thinking, problem-solving in a seemingly illogical way. I try to look beyond the current headlines and sniff out an alternative vision. By sticking my nose beyond the customary curtain of reasoning, I get a scent of what is blowing in the wind and might conceivably happen. Of course, it is still guess work and as such not a sure bet, but..... So, if you read something strange here, or sometimes read something that sounds way-off, well, that's why.

LATELY I HAVE BEEN gathering info on the Far East, Japan and China, where I think we will see some startling developments.

Japan. By all measurements, the people there are rich: the average person has savings of \$70,000; yet, its economic situation is becoming unbearable and its financial system is ready to tear under incredible strain. Japan has been in a recession for 10 years, and its stock market, the Nikkei Index, has slid from a high of 40,000 to its current low of somewhere near 13,000, a decrease of 70 per cent. Since the banks own a lot of stocks, not yet adjusted to these low values, a day of reckoning is close at hand, especially since its main markets, the U.S.A. and Europe, are slipping into a recession, depriving Japan of its only means of rescue: exports.

This looming crisis will shred Japanese society to pieces, forcing it to suddenly change direction. Which way? That's the big question. Japan also is a nation of

talented and disciplined people, industrious, frugal, yet, unwilling to adopt our capitalistic ways of lay-offs, merciless financing, wholesale bankruptcies.

The Land of the Rising Sun is also increasingly critical of the U.S. presence there, especially on Okinawa, where the ill-fated China surveillance mission began, and where a new plane is now prepared to resume spying along China's border, perhaps with a fighter escort. The deaths of nine students in the submarine accident is also fresh in their minds, one of many happenings involving U.S. personnel.

Here is my hunch: I believe that when the Japanese bubble bursts, its government will turn against the U.S.A., which imposed the current economic system on them in 1945, a framework that proved to be unsuitable for their mentality. Even though Japan cruelly suppressed China in the thirties, I can foresee an alliance between these two proud nations, because China has the manpower and a potential market of billions, and Japan has the technical, industrial and especially the financial ability. It will be a marriage of convenience, sparked by the old adage: the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

CHINA. NO DOUBT there is some sort of confrontation brewing between the U.S. and China. The recent collision of a U.S. spy plane and a Chinese fighter is just one of the several disturbing developments. It must be noted that, although the young people in China are eager to adopt some of the modern ways of the world, they also have become increasingly nationalistic. The U.S. suffered a blow to its prestige and reputation when this mighty state apologized for violating Chinese airspace by landing the crippled plane in Chinese territory. The U.S. will look for revenge, and it has already come in the form of arms sales to Taiwan, the island China claims as its own. This has again increased tension in the Far East.

There is also the defection last December of Xu Junping, director

of the Chinese defense ministry, a severe blow to the Chinese Intelligence community. The American plan to push through a national missile system (NMD) is a sore point with the Chinese as well, because they regard this as aimed at neutralizing China's long-range nuclear arsenal, a system that, as yet, poses no danger to the U.S. Add to this, the cutoff of U.S. satellite technology transfers to China and a series of spying incidents at U.S. national weapons laboratories, and we see that there is deep trouble fermenting in the Far East. No wonder that in March Beijing announced a 17.7 per cent increase in defense spending this year, the biggest expansion in real terms in two decades.

THE REAL MISSION OF

that spy plane was to detect the new Chinese nuclear submarines, now undergoing sea trials, and capable of sinking American aircraft carriers. The crew also was probing the expansion of the Chinese navy, which already has new Russian built destroyers, new diesel attack submarines, new anti-ship missiles and other strategic capabilities.

China is a long way from the U.S. mainland. Even Okinawa, its main staging area, is 2000 km from the Chinese shores. The waters there, the South China Sea and the Taiwan Straits, where China focuses its expansionist activities, are shallow and dotted with islands and other shoals, posing challenges to the U.S. Navy. Instead of operating on the high seas, the U.S. Fleet in the region must be ready to operate near coastlines, locations that call for a much different type of ship. So, in order to be effective in the Far East, the U.S. fleet needs new vessels, smaller, more agile flatboats that can operate close to shore and are not as costly or vulnerable as these monstrous aircraft carriers with thousands of personnel.

But all this will take years to implement and will require lots of tax dollars, and with large tax cuts planned for the U.S., the real question is where the money will come from to finance all this, especially since a recession is brewing. Are we in for deficit financing, as was the case with Reagan?

Although the U.S. is still unequalled in military might, the country as a whole has some pronounced weaknesses. One of them is our computer-dominated society — we depend on them for most of our transactions and communications. Not so China. During the 11 day stand-off over the U.S. spy

plane. China defaced U.S. websites. The opposite cannot be done: in China people still use the abacus, a hand-held frame, simple to construct, quite effective and immune to crashes, unless you drop them. There are a lot of smart people in China who can easily paralyze our thinking machines.

THE OTHER weaknesses are financial and environmental. Europe is furious about how Bush handled Kyoto. In his election campaign, Bush trumpeted his belief in humane values, but now, seated on the throne of power, in his halting and limited vocabulary, he utters a devastating, divisive and ultra-nationalistic refrain: "We do what we want, for ourselves, regardless of the consequences for the rest of the world. If you don't like it, your tough luck."

But the rest of the world has some surprising power over the U.S. There is an increasing desire to teach the U.S. a lesson in 'economy,' in the original sense of being frugal. In the 2002 budget, Bush's blueprint for future action, he proposes to cut energy efficiency research and development by 27 per cent overall, stifling efforts to improve efficiency in homes, vehicles, businesses and industry. Adding insult to injury, he wants to cut renewable energy and development programs by 36 per cent, just as rising fuel prices have Americans looking for alternative sources.

In a diabolic twist, Bush II wants funding for drastically limited renewable energy research to come from revenue of oil from the vulnerable Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This proposal displays a shortsightedness akin to blindness: it may cure the disease of the so-called energy crisis for a few months, but eventually this mentality will kill the patient — all of us. At the Quebec Summit, Bush had only one refrain: "We need more energy. We are in a crisis." Yet, a simple law to enhance automobile efficiency will cure it.

Europe is serious about conservation, but in general the American populace is not. It is acting as if there is no tomorrow, both in their personal finances and in their treatment of the environment.

The other weakness is financial. Money-wise, its debt to Europe and Japan has, over the past decades, increased to trillions of dollars. Personal debt, mortgaged to the hilt, maximized limits on credit cards, all mean that restraint is the only alternative. And restraint means a prolonged recession. If these countries, especially

Japan and Germany, repatriate their money, we will see Wall street and the dollar collapse, something which will harm the U.S. more than the temporary benefits of disregarding Kyoto. The U.S. is as strong as its dollar, which rests on some very fragile foundations. Importing more oil and natural gas will make matters worse: both are finite products, prone to drastic price increases. A weaker dollar and high fuel prices will cause high inflation also.

ALL THIS BETRAYS A tremendous lack of wisdom. The World's Ruler apparently thinks that since future generations have done nothing for him, he can wash his hands of them — like Pilate. The U.S. has been tremendously blessed in its short history. I have always been taught — and I try to practise it — that we are blessed in order to be a blessing. That is the Christian Way. Apparently the U.S. has a different view. In its flagrantly selfish way, it displays suicidal tendencies, endangering itself and the entire world.

Time magazine, in a special issue, dedicated to global warming, subtitled, "Climbing temperatures. Melting glaciers. Rising seas. All over the world we're feeling the heat. Why not Washington?" concludes: "Humanity embarked on the dangerous experiment of tinkering with the climate. Now that we know what we are doing, it would be utterly foolish to continue."

If we do it the Bush way, it is certain time for our show on earth.

Bert Hielema's website — www.geocities.com/hielemab — has been updated again.

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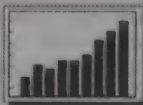
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Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, nine business days prior to publication

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Anniversary

1961 May 20 2001
It is with joy and thanksgiving that we look forward to celebrating the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

JOHN and MARGARET
MIDDELJANS

We pray for God's continued blessing in your lives.

Sandra & Paul Schoemaker —
Kitchener, Ont.
Michelle, Natalie & Ryan
Eileen & Rick Hoekstra — Kitchener,
Ont.
Lindsay, Lauren & Benjamin
John & April Middeljans —
Champaign, Ill.

An Open House will be held D.V. on May 26 from 2 - 4 p.m. at Laurentian Hills Christian School, Kitchener, Ontario

Best Wishes only please
Home Address: 44 Ashley Court,
Kitchener ON N2E 2Z8

Anniversaries



Congratulations to Abram & Cornelia Demooy on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Rijnsburg, Z.H. Exeter, Ont.
1951 May 9 2001
It is with joy and thanksgiving to our Lord for His goodness, that we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

ABRAM and CORNELIA DEMOOY
(nee VAN DEN BOSCH)

Our prayer is that God will give them many more years together.
With love from your children and grandchildren:

Didi & Albert Van Dyken — Exeter, Ont.

Maryke & George Straw — Rockwood, Ont.

Abram & Mary Anne Demooy —
Peterborough, Ont.

Henry & April Demooy — Picton, Ont.
Robert (deceased 1997)

Home address: 11 Brook Side Place,
Exeter, ON N0M 1S2

**Send your anniversary,
birthday and other important family notices to:
Christian Courier at fax #: 905-682-8313 or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com**

1951 May 23 2001
With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord for His many blessings, we hope to celebrate on May 23, 2001, the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

ARIE and MARIA HOORNWEG
(nee BAGGERMAN)

Together with them, we pray for God's continued blessings.

Alister & Tina Scott — Trenton, Ont.

Melinda, Carolyn

Charlie & Mary Ann Botden —

Enterprise, Ont.

Christopher, Phillip, Alicia,

Stephanie

Paul & Rena Hoornweg — Frankford, Ont.

Nicholas, Timothy, Maria,

Benjamin

Dan Hoornweg — Toronto, Ont.

Jack & Judy Goodjohn —

Mount Albert, Ont.

Hannah

An Open House will be held on Saturday, May 26, from 2 - 4 p.m. at the home of Alister and Tina Scott, 6 Hillside Crescent, Trenton.

Best wishes only.
Home address: 22 Fourth Ave.,
Trenton, ON K8V 5N3

Anniversaries

1951 Gramsbergen Strathroy
the Neth Ontario

Happy 50th Anniversary!

HENRY and HENRICA JURJENS
(nee LENNIPS)

Congratulations and love from your children

Gerry & Johanna Jurjens — Stratford, Ont.

Henry & Ina Jurjens — Lucknow, Ont.

Lou & Joy Jurjens — Lucknow, Ont.

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Richard & Brenda Jurjens — Strathroy, Ont.

Jim Jurjens — London, Ont.

Joanne & Walter Kroezen — Acton, Ont.

and 14 grandchildren

Please join us in a celebration of the anniversary as well as 50 years in Canada at an Open House on Saturday May 26, 2001, D.V. from 2-4 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the Westmount Christian Reformed Church, 405 Drury Lane, Strathroy, Ontario

Home Address: 412 Carrie St.,

Strathroy, ON N7G 3E2

We celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness in marriage to

HARRY and RITA VERHEY

May 17, 1951

We thank God for you and rejoice in your love and faithfulness

Love from your children and grandchildren:

Harry & Deb Verhey

Nicole and Jason and Savanna

Michelle

Conny & Andy Sytsma

Sara, Lauren and Brooke

Lucy & Graham Dearsley

Leah and Joel

John & Carol Verhey

Michael and Jacob

Home Address: 26 Hall Rd., Apt. 311,

Georgetown, ON L7G 5G5

With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, we wish to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

JAMES and WILMA

LYCKLAMA A NIJEHOLT

who were married May 15, 1941, in Blija, Friesland.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them." (Genesis 1.27)

We, your 9 children, 33 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren pray for God's continued blessings in your lives

We invite family and friends to an Open House on Saturday, May 19, 2001,

D.V., from 2-4 p.m. at the New Street Burlington Christian Reformed Church.

Home Address: 705-3020 Glencrest Rd., Burlington, ON L7N 2H2

Lemmer

the Neth

With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, we hope to celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary on Monday, May 21, 2001

GERBEN and TEATSKA BERGSMAN
(nee HAGA)

Address: 69-33433 Marshall Rd.,
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1K8

WILLEM and AUDREY RANG
(BRUININK)

From Enschede, the Netherlands in May 17, 1951 to Dunnville, Ontario in 2001 you have "kept yourselves in the love of God."

We praise Him for your 50 years together — for your timeless devotion to one another — and your endless love for your family.

With love from Rita & Marten Demmer, Debbie & Hans Bulk, Wendy & John Bakker, Elba Adams, Lloyd & Sandy Rang and all thirteen of your grandchildren.

1951 May 17 2001

"Praise the Lord, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever." (Ps. 106:1)

With joy and thanksgiving we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

WILLEM and DINY HUMMEL

(nee MOES)

Congratulations, Mom and Dad!

May the Lord continue to keep you in His loving care.

With love

Luke & Lammie Hummel — Nobleford, Alta

Jeremy, Daniel, Joel, Karla,

Elizabeth, Emily

Albert & Ellen Hummel — Nobleford, Alta

Christopher, Edward, Jodi, Andrew

Wilma & Martin Meindersma —

Fort Macleod, Alta

David, Jolene

William Hummel — Nobleford, Alta

Bryan & Wendy Hummel — Nepean, Ont.

Rachel, Mikaela

Jim Hummel & Carol Stomp —

Edmonton, Alta.

Tim & Benita Hummel — Nobleford, Alta.

Dayna, Jaime, Michael, Matthew

We invite family and friends to join us for an Open House on Monday,

May 21, 2001, from 2 - 5 p.m. at

Sven Ericksen's Family Restaurant,

Lethbridge, Alta.

Correspondence address 242-100

2 Ave South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 0B5

1961 May 19 2001

With joy and thankfulness, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

ALBERT and NELL KORTEN
(nee VROOM)

May God continue to keep you both in his care. With love from your family:

Adrian & Beatrice Korten — Bangkok, Thailand

John & Judy Korten — London, Ont.

Nathan, Joshua, Erica, Cassandra

Trudy & Gerald Bruusema —

Ancaster, Ont.

Alyssa, Janine

Home address: 3336 Menno St.,

Vineland, ON LOR 2C0

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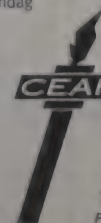
Church Anniversaries	Obituaries	Teachers	Notice
<p>25th ANNIVERSARY The Mount Brydges Christian Reformed Church will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on June 16 and 17. A dessert social is planned for Saturday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Strathroy Community Christian School, 7870 Walkers Drive, Strathroy. Worship services on Sunday will be held at 9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. with former pastors participating. All former members and friends are invited. For more information please call 519-264-2362.</p>	<p>Roden, Gr Petrolia, Ont. the Neth (Lambton Meadowview) January 10, 1906 - April 2, 2001 "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) On April 2, 2001. JANNA DEVRIES (nee VLOK) went to be with her heavenly Father at the age of 95. Beloved Mom of: Dick DeVries -- Grand Rapids, Mich. Alice DeVries -- Sarnia, Ont. Loving Oma of: David DeVries and fiancée Jamie -- Grand Rapids, Mich. Jenna DeVries -- Grand Rapids, Mich. Also lovingly remembered by Karen DeVries -- Grand Rapids, Mich. The funeral service took place on April 4, 2001 at the Wyoming Christian Reformed Church, with Pastor Richard VanderVaart and Pastor Ralph Wigboldus officiating. Correspondence address: 740 O'Dell Ave., Sarnia, ON N7V 2K8</p>	<p>CAMBRIDGE, ONT.: Cambridge Christian School is in need of a part-time (27%) French teacher for the 2001/2002 school year. This position would be for 4 part mornings per week. Please send letter of application and resume to: Cambridge Christian School 229 Myers Rd., Cambridge, ON N1R 7H3 Att.: Mr. Andy VanderPloeg, Principal phone: 519-623-2261; fax: 519-623-4042 e-mail: neilbenj@enoreo.on.ca</p>	<p>C.C. SUBSCRIBERS! We had to change our mailing labels to meet Canada Post regulations and update our system. Some discrepancies have shown up in the new mailing list. Please let us know if you have a problem with the way your address appears on the label. Please call 1-800-969-4838. Grace, circulation.</p>
<p>1951 50th ANNIVERSARY 2001 First Christian Reformed Church Brandon, Manitoba "The Lord has done great things for us" (Psalm 126:3) September 14, 15, 16, 2001 Everyone is Welcome! Contact: First Christian Reformed Church, 1509 Victoria Ave Brandon, MB R7A 1B7 E-mail: firstcrrc@gatewest.net Phone: 204-727-4652 or 204-725-1445</p>	<p>Zwartsluis Terrace, B.C. the Neth Canada October 8, 1924 - April 17, 2001 "Blessed are those who dwell in Your house, they are ever praising You" (Psalm 84:4) Peacefully, the Lord called home to eternal glory our much loved wife, mother and grandmother ANNIE VANDE VELDE (nee DE WILDE) She is held in loving memory by her husband Derk, and by the many members of her family and her friends in the Netherlands and Canada. Funeral was held at Terrace Christian Reformed Church on April 21, 2001, Rev. P. Hendriks officiating. Address: D. Vande Velde, 1-4603 Straume Ave., Terrace, BC V8G 2C2</p>	<p>ORANGEVILLE, ONT.: Orangeville Christian School invites applications for a definite Junior/Intermediate position commencing September 2001. Strengths in French would be an asset. If you would like to be part of a vibrant, growing staff and school with strategic plans for relocating to a new facility, than O.C.S. is the place for you! Please forward your resume, statement of faith and philosophy of Christian Education to: Orangeville Christian School PO Box 176, Orangeville ON L9W 2Z6 Phone: 519-941-3381; Fax: 519-941-4391; e-mail: ocs@hurontario.net Att.: Education Committee.</p>	<p>Job Opportunities Science and a Music position open: Smithville District Christian High has a senior science position and a part time music position available September 2001 (Come join us!) We offer a holistic Christian education in modern updated facilities supported by a caring staff and a progressive support community. Please address all inquiries to: Marc Strooboscher, Principal Smithville District Christian High School 6488 Smithville Road Smithville, ON L0R 2A0 Ph: 905-957-3255 Fax: 905-957-3431 email: sdoffice@sdcch.on.ca</p>
<p>Ancaster Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario All former pastors and members are invited to help us celebrate the 25th anniversary on June 23 and 24, 2001. Join us for a church picnic and program on Saturday and celebrating services on Sunday. For more information call the church at 905-648-2323 or e-mail at acrc@icom.ca.</p>	<p>Job Opportunity Rimbeay CRC is seeking a PASTOR to minister to our congregation of 40 families, situated in Central Alberta. Our services are a blend of traditional and contemporary. A church profile is available. Send all inquiries to: Rimbeay Search Committee c/o Kathleen van Dam, Box 759, Bentley, AB T0C 0J0, Canada. Phone 403-748-2336 e-mail: bkvandam@aol.com</p>	<p>WYOMING, ONT.: John Knox Christian School needs a full-time Grades five/six teacher for September 2001. Contact us if you are keen to challenge students to excel, agreeable to being part of a vibrant, encouraging staff and ready to work with a supportive school community. Send your resume, statement of faith, summary of experience, and educational philosophy to: Mr. Ymko Boersma, Principal John Knox Christian School Box 81, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0 phone/fax: 519-845-3112 e-mail: jkcs@ebtech.net</p>	
<p>50th ANNIVERSARY Exeter Christian Reformed Church, Ontario, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on September 22 and 23, 2001. Join us Saturday for brunch, Open House, barbeque and evening program or Sunday for our special services. For dinner reservations or more details, call Jennifer Branderhorst 519-235-2990 or e-mail: bulletin@exetercrrc.on.ca</p>	<p>Accommodation Will you be visiting the Hamilton area this summer? Make Redeemer your home away from home. Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, rents 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom, furnished apartment units and 4-bedroom, furnished townhouse style units, from mid-May through mid-August. Enjoy our wonderful setting while vacationing in the Hamilton, Niagara or Toronto region. Excellent nightly and weekly rates. For more information please call 905-648-2131, extension 4260, 4290.</p>		
<p>50th Anniversary of Wallaceburg C.R.C. "The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3) All former pastors and members are invited to help us celebrate on July 7 and 8, 2001. Saturday social time starts at 4 p.m. and a catered supper will be served at 6 p.m. (\$12.00 per plate, please RSVP) followed by a program at 7:30 p.m. Sunday we will worship at 10 a.m. praising God for His faithfulness. Please RSVP by June 7, 2001 to Bert Vandendool at 519-892-3589.</p>	<p>WORSHIP DIRECTOR First Christian Reformed Church of Abbotsford, B.C. is seeking a part-time worship director with a Reformed Christian perspective to help plan and lead blended worship and to encourage and develop members' gifts for leading worship. For info/application form contact (by June 30) Search Committee, c/o First CRC, Box 485, Abbotsford, BC V2S 5Z5, or e-mail the church office at abby1crrc@uniserve.com</p>	<p>Book Wanted I would like to know if anyone has any "Goud Elseje" books by Max de Lange-Praamsma in their bookcases that I could purchase to add to my collection. The books are no longer available in the Netherlands. Please call me collect at 905-383-6753. My name is Louise.</p>	
<p>Church News Christian Reformed Church Address change: Covenant CRC of Edmonton is now worshipping at their new facilities at 19010-87 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5T 6P2. Time of worship changed to 10:00 a.m. p.m. service remains unchanged at 4:00 p.m.</p>			

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Teachers

VERNON, B.C.:

Vernon Christian School is a parent-operated school, serving a diverse Christian community in the sunny Okanagan Valley. Recently we have witnessed a substantial growth in enrollment, directly opposite to the decline that other schools in Vernon are experiencing. We are, God willing, looking to add a **Grade 10 program** in the fall of 2002. To that end we will be hiring a **full time teacher in the fall of 2001**. In addition to a teaching assignment he/she will be asked to give leadership in **developing and growing a Grade 10 program** for 2002.

We are looking for a person who is excited about taking on this challenge. He/she should be a hard-working, self-starter with experience at the middle and/or secondary school level. The successful applicant will have strength in the areas of **Math/Sciences and Computers**. Coaching skills would be an asset as well. We may also have openings in **Middle School French teacher** and a **primary teacher**.

Send resumes to:

Mr. Larry Simpson, Principal
Vernon Christian School
6890 Pleasant Valley Rd.,
Vernon, BC V1B 3R5
Phone: 250-545-7345
Fax: 250-545-0254
E-mail: vcs@mindlink.bc.ca

REXDALE, Ont.:

Timothy Christian School in Rexdale, Ontario is seeking a teacher for **Grade 7** for the 2001/2002 school year. Computer/P.E. experience would be an asset. This is a full-time position. For more information, please call or write the school:

Miss Trudy Jager, Principal
Timothy Christian School
28 Elmhurst Drive
Rexdale, Ontario
M9W 2J5

Langley Christian Schools

LCS, an inter-denominational Christian school system of about 700 students (K-12) is inviting applications for September 2001:

- Special Education / Learning Assistance (Grades 7-12)
- 70 % Primary Position (Grades 1-6)
- Computer Teacher (Grades 7-12)
- Science - Chemistry (Grades 9-12)
- Math Teacher (Grades 9-11)
- Middle School Teachers (Grades 7 & 8)

Forward inquiries to:

Leo Smit, Superintendent
22702 - 48th Avenue
Langley, BC V2Z 2T6
Phone: 604-533-0839
Fax: 604-533-0842
E-Mail: lmsmit@home.com

Timothy Christian School (Rexdale) has a definite opening for

PRINCIPAL

beginning the 2001-2002 school year.

Our school of 200 students and thirteen staff was established in 1958 and is situated in a northwest suburb of Toronto, known as Rexdale. If you are interested in leading a dedicated staff and being supported by a committed Christian school community, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you use your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in His kingdom. Please send resumes (include references), a statement of faith and a brief philosophy of education to:

Principal Search Committee
Att.: Timothy Christian School,
28 Elmhurst Drive, Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5

If you wish to know more about the position please feel free to direct enquiries to:
Mr. William Groot 416-743-2554

LACOMBE, Alta.:

Lacombe Christian School, approximately 371 students in K-9, located in sunny Central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for a **Grade 1-6 Music and Junior High Band** position. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume to:

Martin Folkerts
Lacombe Christian School
5206 - 58 St., Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: 403-782-6531;
Fax: 403-782-5760 or e-mail:
lacchris@telusplanet.net

LACOMBE, ALTA.:

Central Alberta Christian High School is searching for a full-time teacher with experience and/or expertise in the areas of **Business/Computers and/or Math/Science**. However, applicants able to teach a variety of core subjects will also be considered.

Preference will be granted to graduates of a Christian college and/or with experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required.

Please direct applications to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Christian High School, 22 Eagle Rd.,
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7
Phone: 403-782-4535;
Fax: 403-782-5425
e-mail: cach@telusplanet.net

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Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Christ Community Church of Victoria on Vancouver Island in southwest B.C. is seeking a full-time Pastor — solo position. CCC is one of two CRC churches in Victoria, with 135 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package, please contact:

Mike Kamsteeg,
c/o Christ Community Church,
3397 Holland Ave., Victoria, B.C.,
V8Z 5K2
Phone: 250-479-3297
or e-mail:
ccchurch@islandnet.com

GREENHOUSE GROWER

We are a well established medium sized greenhouse operation in the Niagara area producing seasonal potted plants and some cut flowers. We have an immediate opening for a greenhouse grower. This opening provides an excellent opportunity for an experienced and mature applicant. Qualifications include a minimum of three years experience in a similar production environment and a proven track record. There is a house available for the qualified applicant. For more information or an interview, contact:

Brian van Staaldin at
905-643-2002; e-mail:
brian@staaldin-floral.com

Grace Christian Reformed Church of Welland is seeking a part-time YOUTH LEADER

This person will organize youth activities and equip youth to follow Christ and build our church community. Please send resume to:

Grace Christian Reformed Church
Att. Youth Ministry Committee
660 South Pelham St., Welland,
ON L3C 3C8
e-mail: graccrc@canada.com

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Accommodation Available

Visiting Niagara or coming over from Holland this summer? Consider renting our home, a bungalow in residential St. Catharines, Ont., close to beautiful Niagara Falls. Available from mid-June to July 31, \$550 per week. Contact us at 905-934-5358 or e-mail: sencor@sympatico.ca

Personal

Christian lady, in her 40s, who enjoys church, music, homemaking and travel, would love to meet a Christian gentleman, 40-55 yrs. of age, with similar interests. Please send letters to: File #2717, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

The Board of Directors of Classis Hamilton Homes for the Aged, Inc., operating as

Shalom Manor

a 132 bed, Christian, *Long Term Care Facility*, serving seniors of Dutch descent from the Reformed Christian community, requires a qualified and experienced

Chief Executive Officer

The successor to the retiring CEO must have:

- a university degree in Business Administration and/or Health Care Administration.
- experience in working successfully with a volunteer Board of Directors.
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- exceptional leadership, financial management and administrative skills, with a focus on programs, care and services for the elderly
- minimum of three years senior management experience in Long Term Care
- a good working knowledge of the Dutch language to interact with the residents, as well as computer skills, will be definite assets

Please mail your resume stating qualifications, experience and compensation expectations, in confidence, no later than **June 30, 2001**, to the:

Chair, CEO Search Committee, Shalom Manor
12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

CO-ORDINATOR
CHURCH RELATIONS/
DOMESTIC MINISTRIES

The Burlington office of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a full-time opening with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

Responsibilities under Church Relations include assisting board delegates and alternates, deacons, individual supporters, and congregations to understand and financially support the ministries of CRWRC. Under Domestic Ministries, responsibilities include oversight of the refugee sponsorship and resettlement program and facilitating CRWRC's connection with Diaconal Ministries of Canada (DMC).

College diploma or university degree in Community/Public Relations or Marketing preferred, with a minimum of three years related experience. Previous experience in diaconal ministry or refugee resettlement programs is a plus. Understanding and working knowledge of the CRWRC and the CRCNA is required.

A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a letter of interest along with a copy of your resume by **May 22, 2001** to:

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
3475 Mainway, P.O. Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8 Canada
616-224-5881/Fax 616-224-5896
E-mail: colemann@crcna.org

Miscellaneous

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Limit one sample per church. Normal price for quantities of five or more \$7.50. We rebind and restore all types of books, including personal and family Bibles.



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95 Arnold Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 3P3

The Campus Ministry Committee of Classis British Columbia North West, invites applications for a full time

CAMPUS MINISTER

to establish and develop a new campus ministry at the
University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)
Prince George, B.C.

UNBC is a relatively small university, which openly states it is committed to the spiritual development of students. This campus ministry position will be the first full time chaplain for the university geared to ministering to a diverse student population, faculty and staff, including members of the Christian Reformed Church.

The unique nature of UNBC as a regional university allows it to be a strategic source of leadership to the entire region. The campus ministry is envisioned to become an integral part of the life and influence of the university.

We are looking for a Christian with a strong commitment to the Reformed faith;

- * Is self motivated and able to develop this new ministry,
- * Has advanced academic and/or professional degrees,
- * Has experience in working pastorally with youth and students,
- * Is able to relate well to religious and ethnically diverse groups on campus,
- * Able to nurture healthy relationships with volunteer campus ministry workers from other denominations and faiths.

A job description is available upon request. Please send a letter of application, a complete resume, two reference letters, as well as a brief outline of a personal vision for campus ministry to:

Rev. Pieter Hendricks

4714 Loen Ave., Terrace, B.C. V8G 1Z7

E-mail: phendricks@kermode.net

Deadline for applications to be considered is June 1, 2001

Durham Christian Homes Inc.
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for Tekoa Manor on December 1, 2001

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Salary from \$35,000. in line with ability and experience, plus health, disability and RRSP benefits. Two bedroom unit at market rent is included.

Please direct enquiries by May 15 to:

FRED WIND, Executive Director
Durham Christian Homes Inc.
100 Glen Hill Drive South., Whitby, ON L1N 8R4
Tel: 905-430-1666
Fax: 905-430-1741
e-mail: dchomes@sympatico.ca

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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- May 19-20** 50th Anniversary Taber CRC, **Taber, Alta.** Call 403-223-8402; e-mail: dvisser@telusplanet.net
- May 20** Dutch Service Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd. E, **Ancaster, Ont.** 3 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga preaching.
- May 25-26** Spring Conference for Eastern Ontario, United Reformed Churches in **Athens and Brockville/Hulbert**. St. Andrew's Presbyt. Church, 461 Centre St., Prescott. Speaker Dr. N. Kloosterman. See ad in this issue.
- May 26** Senior Choir of Holland Chr. Homes **Brampton**, celebrate their 25th anniversary, 7:30 p.m. Heritage Hall.
- May 25-June 2** Ermelo Male Chorus in Concert. St. Thomas, Georgetown, Toronto, Kingston, Peterborough, Brampton. See the different times and locations in the ad placed in this issue. For more info. call 905-459-3913
- June 1-2** Woodland Christian High School, **Breslau (Kitchener)** will celebrate 25 years of Christian Education. Dinner/reception at Guelph Place, Guelph June 1, at 6:30 p.m.; Open House Sat., June 2, 1-4 p.m. at the school. For tickets and info. call the school at 519-648-2114 or fax 519-648-3402.
- June 2** Liberation Choir, Grace Anglican Church, 15 Albion Rd., **Brantford, Ont.** For info call 905-457-2348.
- June 7-9** Bible and Ministry Conference, **Calvin Theological Seminary**. For info. pverho72@calvin.edu. See ad.
- June 9** Christian Singles Social, **Burlington, Ont.** See this issue's ad for info.
- June 13** Hollandse Dag, **Kingston, Ont.** First Chr. Ref. Church, 10 a.m. Speaker Rev. R. Praamsma, Topic: *De wederkomst van Christus*. For info call 613-546-5615 or 613-542-7928
- June 13** Hollandse Dag, **Moorefield, Ont.** 10 a.m., Speaker Rev. Jacob Kuntz. See ad this issue. 519-638-2053
- June 16** Open House for Tena Van Schepen, John Knox Chr. School **Brampton, Ont.** 2-4 p.m. See ad this issue
- June 16-17** 25th anniversary Mount Brydges CRC, **Mt. Brydges, Ont.** See ad in this issue.
- June 23-24** Ancaster CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.** Celebration picnic Saturday, services on Sunday. Call 905-648-2323
- July 7-8** 50th anniversary Wallaceburg CRC, **Wallaceburg, Ont.** Saturday 4 p.m. social. Sunday 10 p.m. Praise service. For info. call 519-892-3569 or e-mail: jwdykema@kent.net See ad in this issue.

De tweëndertigste (32) Hollandse Dag wordt gehouden D.V. Woensdag 13 juni, 2001 om 10 uur v.m. in de **Moorefield Community Centre**. Samenhang, voordrachten, speciale muziek enz. Spreker: Ds. Jacob Kuntz van Brampton, Ont. Lunch en uw eigen koffiekop meenemen. Vrij koffie en koek. Voor gezelligheid en plezierig uitgaan, moet je de *Hollandse Dag* niet overslaan. Voor nadere informatie bel: Hilbert Rumph, 519-638-2053

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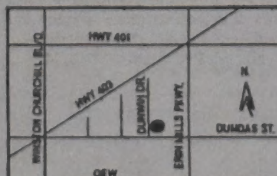
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All former students, colleagues and friends are invited to an

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TENA VAN SCHEPEN
 (nee Vellinga)

★in recognition of 34 years service in Christian education and her upcoming retirement

when: **Saturday June 16, 2001 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**
 where: **John Knox Christian School**
82 McLaughlin Road S. Brampton

★if you wish to contribute to a special planned gift, please contact Wendy Vyfvinkel 905-821-0373

BIBLE AND MINISTRY CONFERENCE

The Former Prophets: Joshua - Kings
 Calvin Theological Seminary

June 7, 7:00 p.m. to June 9, 12:00 p.m.

Speakers:	Meditations by:
Ellen F. Davis	William T Koopmans
Duane K. Kelderman	Stanley D. Walters
Arie C. Leder	Seminars by:
Margaret Adams Parker	Andrew E. Beunk
John H. Stek	Sidney Greidanus
John L. Thompson	Stanley Mast
Stanley D. Walters	Eep Talstra
John D. Witvliet	John L. Thompson

Conference fee: \$50.00 (CDN \$60.00)

Retirees and students: \$25.00 (CDN \$30.00)

Registration: June 7, 5:30 p.m.

For conference schedule and further information:
www.calvin.edu/seminary or
 contact Paul Verhoef at: pverho72@calvin.edu

Spring Conference -
"Keeping the Faith"

Speaker:

Dr. Nelson Kloosterman
 Professor of New Testament, Ethics
 Mid-America Reformed Seminary
Friday May 25th - 8:00p.m.

General Audiance

"Hanging On for Dear Life"
 (2 Tim 1:13-14)

Saturday May 26th-10:00a.m.

Young Peoples Societies
"Cultivating Your Christian Worldview"

(Romans 12: 1-2)

Location: St. Andrew's
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 Sponsored by the URC in
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News

New website focuses on concerns of refugees

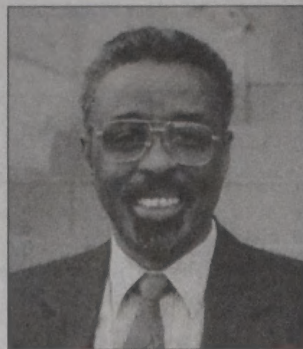
Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Refugees and immigrants trying to come to Canada face many obstacles, such as the so-called "Head Tax," and problems getting identity documents. Citizens For Public Justice's Getting Landed Project focuses on these issues and on trying to find solutions. The project's new website is raising the profile of this issue.

Ahmed Hashi, CPJ's refugee issues co-ordinator, and communications co-ordinator Louise Slobodian have contributed to much of the content of the new website (www.cpj.ca/getting_landed)

which explains what the Getting Landed Project is about, outlines some key obstacles facing immigrants and refugees, and offers four new information kits, which can be downloaded free of charge.

The Getting Landed Project is managed by the Public Justice Resource Centre and CPJ, and headed by project co-ordinator Ahmed Hashi. Other agencies involved with the project include the Ad Hoc Coalition Against the Head Tax, and the Coalition for a Just Immigration and Refugee Policy. The project was launched in response to what it calls "formidable challenges and is dedicated to



COURTESY CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE
Ahmed Hashi, CPJ's refugee issues co-ordinator.

removing the barriers that keep refugees and immigrants in limbo."

The website explains more about the consequences of refugees and immigrants living in "limbo" while waiting to get permanent resident status in Canada. "Refugees and immigrants need status to get student loans, because without them, college, university and other training programs are beyond the reach of most," explains the site. "Without status, they cannot sponsor family members and must wait to reunite with loved ones. Without status they are not guaranteed re-entry

into Canada and so, in effect, travel is barred. They are barred from employment in certain sectors and they cannot participate in the political process. This limbo situation — this sense of uncertainty — causes refugees and immigrants tremendous psychological and economic hardship."

Working for change

The primary goal of the project is to achieve political change on specific immigration policies that cause refugees and immigrants undue delays in obtaining landed immigrant status. The project is undertaking a broad-based public awareness campaign among the general public and stakeholders. It aims to empower the refugee community by providing information and training on how to work with the media and participate in the public policy-making process.

A recent addition to the site is a brief responding to the new immigration bill (C-11), which is now being considered by the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. The brief lists the consequences of immigration "limbo," and makes 10 main recommendations about how to reduce and eliminate this "limbo" and other barriers to landing as immigrants and to family reunification. One key recommendation is:

"Include in this bill the right of all [United Nations] Convention refugees to sponsor family members and promote family reunification without discrimination on the basis of economic status; provide for the simultaneous processing of landing applications for in-Canada refugees and their family members abroad; establish a statutory time limit for the processing of family reunification applications on not more than one-and-a-half years." These suggestions will "help enable such Convention refugees to get landed, more quickly become full citizens of this country and then become active, effective and contributing members of our shared communities," states the brief.

'Head Tax' discriminates

The Getting Landed Project objects to the Right of Landing Fee, commonly known as the "Head Tax," because it contends that the fee discriminates against the poor and people of color. The website states that the fee, which is \$975 per adult in addition to other landing processing fees of \$500 per adult and \$100 per child, "does not reflect an immigrant's ability to pay." The tax "has an inequitable and even racist impact on

immigrants from the South, most of whom are relatively poor and of color. The same \$975 that may be just a few weeks' pay for an accountant from Italy, could be a full year's pay for an accountant from India." The tax was originally levied to help pay off the national deficit, but, contend the website's writers, "There no longer exists a rationale for imposing this fee since the deficit has been eliminated."

Progress has been made on this issue, since the government decided, in February 2000, to remove the tax for refugees.

Lengthy investigations

Some immigrants and refugees are investigated by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), because the Immigration department suspects they could be security risks. But CPJ contends, "The length of time that the security screening process takes is unacceptable. Some refugees and immigrants are left in limbo waiting to hear from CSIS for more than 10 years, despite a mandatory maximum two-year period for security screening.... The process is not fair to the many refugees and immigrants who are intimidated by the system and who do not, in most cases, know the status of their applications or the reasons for the lengthy and undue delays in obtaining landed immigrant status. They don't know they are being investigated as a security risk, and so they cannot respond.... This process must be fair, fast, transparent and accountable to the applicant...."

Another key obstacle to refugees immigrating to Canada is the need for identity documents. Refugees who come from war-torn countries or nations without a government (such as Somalia) find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain such documents.

But progress is happening with that issue, too. An agreement was reached with Citizenship and Immigration Canada last December to allow refugees unable to produce IDs to instead provide two sworn declarations attesting to their identity.

CPJ's Hashi has received positive recognition recently for his role in helping out immigrants and refugees. On January 18, he received, on behalf of CPJ, a Certificate of Appreciation from the Ottawa-based Somali-Canadian Advocacy Network in recognition of "outstanding support to the positive resolution of the Somali ID Charter Challenge case" — which helped bring about the ID agreement mentioned above.

News Digest

The Indian rope trick

TORONTO — The legendary Indian rope trick, which has intrigued generations of scientists and magicians, was a hoax, says Peter Lamont, a researcher at Edinburgh University. The trick has never been performed and was invented by the *Chicago Tribune* as part of a circulation drive 111 years ago, he asserts. The *Tribune* caused a storm when it published accounts of a boy in India climbing an unsupported rope and disappearing when he reached the top. He was followed by a man with a sword, who also vanished. Later, the man and the boy would reappear.

The *Globe and Mail* reports Lamont found a small item published in the *Tribune* four months after the original story, admitting it was a hoax dreamed up to sell more newspapers. The *Tribune* thought readers would clue in when they read the by-line: "Fred S. Ellmore."

More error haikus

TORONTO — If your computer is on the fritz, why not take a break from your frustration to read these computer error haikus, provided by CC correspondent Margaret Dinsdale:

*A crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.*

*You step in the stream
But the water has moved on.
This page is not here.*

Macbeth II

EDINBURGH — It has all the intrigue of a Shakespearean tragedy: an ancient Highland castle, and an aristocratic nobleman pitted against his stepmother. Trouble is brewing again in the Macbeth family, according to Reuters. It first flared when Colin Cawdor, 27th Thane of Cawdor and a descendant of the 11th century king made notorious by Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*, unveiled a plan to plant genetically-modified seeds on his 20,000-hectare estate near the Scottish Highland city of Inverness. His stepmother Anjelica, the raven-haired Lady Cawdor, was outraged by her stepson's plans, and threatened to quit the family business if the planting went ahead. Farm manager Steven Barclay withdrew the plan after he and his family received anonymous threats. Lady Cawdor, who owns a nearby organic farm, is pleased that the trials have been halted, and the threat of a family rift lifted.

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